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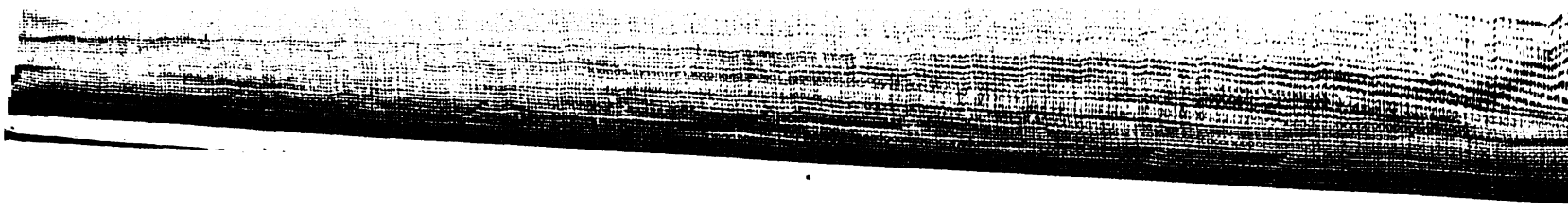

Methods *and* Players *of* Modern Lawn Tennis

BY

J. PARMLY PARET

With Opinions on Disputed Points of Technique from Many Expert Players

EDITED BY

S. WALLIS MERRIHEW

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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With the Deepest Appreciation of
a Life-Long Student of the Game

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO

THE AMERICAN LAWN TENNIS PLAYER

Who Has Put Into the Sport the Finest Points
of Skill that It has To-Day

TO

HOLCOMBE WARD

who gave us the American Twist Service

TO

ROBERT WRENN

who developed the best match-play tactics

TO

WILLIAM LARNED

who perfected ground-strokes to their highest standard

TO

MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN

whose overhead attack has taught the world a new lesson

and last but not least

TO

DWIGHT DAVIS

who gave us the Davis Cup for International Competition

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE

I HAVE no patience with the players who say: "I do not read books on lawn tennis, and have no use for fine-spun theories." Mediocrity is almost always their portion. Their enjoyment of the game suffers because they neither theorise themselves nor study the theories evolved by others.

When, about fifteen years ago, I began to play lawn tennis with some seriousness, my first thought was to secure instruction from the leading writers on the game. To a close study of the rules for rudimentary play laid down by, singularly enough, J. Parmly Paret in the Spalding Guide of that day, I owe, in considerable measure, what small portion of skill I have managed to accumulate. In particular, my possession of a backhand that is passable is due directly to Paret's admonitions on this subject.

An understanding of my own needs has taught me what other players need. Furthermore, as publisher of "American Lawn Tennis" I have sold thousands of books on the game, which has made it possible for me to learn what the average player wants in a book. Out of this knowledge grew the determination to produce such a book, and the present volume is the result of that determination. Its title, "Methods and Players of Modern Lawn Tennis," designates it exactly. It deals with methods and players exclusively, and is designed to be a textbook for players desirous of improving their play. That it will accomplish this purpose, if closely and intelligently studied, I am absolutely convinced.

I have been profoundly impressed with the success of the efforts the author has made to produce a book that would make a three-fold appeal —to the beginner, to the average player and to the expert. The beginner will find in these pages a work that will start him right on the path to proficiency and ground him in the elements of the game. The average player will have before him a textbook that deals exhaustively with the production of strokes and their uses and the employment of proper tactics and generalship on the court. The expert, finally, will discover here much food for thought, no matter how thoroughly he may know the game.

The book contains the most wonderful compilation of expert opinions that has ever been made. In laying the structure of the work, a series of over forty questions was drawn up, each dealing with some disputed point of play. These questions were submitted to all the foremost players

of the past decade, both here and abroad, and the number of replies received exceeded expectations, while their nature was little short of amazing. No player knew what any other had to say in answer, and each reply is reproduced verbatim, without comment of any kind.

The great European war has prevented the inclusion of as many foreign players as was desired, but although Brookes and Wilding, Froitzheim and Kreuzer, Gobert and Decugis could not be reached, Parke and Dixon have replied. Their handling of the questions reveals careful thought, wide experience and strong convictions.

Among the Americans, there are members of every International team for the last ten years, many national champions and no fewer than twenty-six of the first thirty players of the country, according to the official ranking of 1914. No consensus of opinion could be more complete or more authoritative.

There are in existence innumerable photographs of lawn tennis players in action, but from this great mass of material the author has weeded out only the most valuable instantaneous snap-shots of the best players, and I believe that these pages are better illustrated than any previous work on the game. The photographers deserve recognition for such clever work, and as far as possible it has been given in the index to illustrations.

S. WALLIS MERRIHEW.

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I.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GAME

Difficulty of Defining Good Form

AFTER the remarkable season of 1914, with its difficult lessons, it is perhaps more than ever before a precarious undertaking to define what constitutes good form in lawn tennis. Never has more success been won with apparently bad form, and this has increased immensely the difficulty in describing the best way to play.

Of the five really great masters of the game at this time, McLoughlin, Brookes, Wilding, Williams and Parke, certainly two and perhaps three do not play in the orthodox form which has been accepted for decades past by the best authorities.

Weaknesses of Some of the Great Masters

Would any one dare to advise Brookes's grip or his forehand stroke to a beginner? Could McLoughlin's backhand be recommended to an ambitious novice? Does not Williams's foot work constitute a distinct weakness to his play? Wilding, perhaps, might be held up as a model of good form, and surely he is the nearest to orthodox in all his play. In his international matches last year, McLoughlin deliberately ran around very many balls that should have been returned backhanded, freely admitting his weakness at this point of the game.

These men have proven themselves to be the

best masters of the tennis world, but does that in itself vindicate their methods? I should be inclined to doubt it.

Something Else Than Good Form Needed

There seems to be something even above and beyond merely good form that makes for winning in lawn tennis. The best players, as we have seen, have won despite elements of bad form, and we have all seen hosts of instances of players who showed almost perfect technical skill in their play, and still lost to men who seemed far their inferiors.

What is This Precious Jewel?

There is something in the temper, the fighting spirit, and the dogged tenacity of one human being that helps him to conquer another in many a struggle, whether it be for mere sport or a more serious phase of life. This indefinable something in the human make-up that gives "sting" to his attack is what the winners have and the losers lack. It isn't strength alone, for Brookes lacked that; it cannot be only speed and agility, for Wilding was almost without them, nor can it be a quality of the eye.

Constant Practice Will Work Miracles

Yet, whatever it may be, it is not enough alone, and for the encouragement of those who doubt their possession of the priceless jewel, let me say that untiring, persistent, constant practice under reasonably favorable conditions will work miracles, will remove mountains in the path of lawn tennis skill. To be sure, some players are born to the purple—Larned, Pim, Williams, Behr, and a lot of others—but don't forget that McLoughlin, Doherty, Whitman, Wrenn, Ward and as many more, were "dragged up by hand." It

takes ten years of hard work to reach championship form, except in isolated rare cases.

Principles of Good Form Remain Steadfast

But the principles of good form have remained steadfast even after last season's onslaught, and they require very little alteration because of the successes of McLoughlin or Brookes. These men are of the minority and they constitute brilliant exceptions to the proven rules of correct play as shown by the style used by the great majority of the successful players.

Necessity of Beginning Right

It is of vital necessity that those who would learn to play the game well should study the fixed principles of good form and apply them closely in practice. It is particularly important to begin right, for the faulty habits contracted early are very difficult to correct even with the best instruction later on.

Force of Example Very Powerful

The force of example is very powerful in tennis. Every successful player is almost invariably followed by a school of worshippers who imitate the strokes of their model, no matter whether they be good or bad. Success vindicates his methods in their eyes. But for every one who succeeds with bad form there are a hundred followers of the same style who fail with it because it is faulty in theory. Lucky is the young player who has the good fortune to live near and study the style of a successful player who has good form. And lucky is his club, too, for it will almost surely turn out a lot of others from the same mould whose chances for success will be increased tenfold because their basic principles are sound.

If good models or competent instructors are

Value of Written Instruction

not to be had, written instruction is the next resource, and it is with the hope of filling the gap at this point that the present volume has been prepared. To take the broadest possible view of the subject, the author has intended to give his own views for what they may be worth, and to quote from other competent authorities who have written on the game, placing their opinions on disputed points before the reader so that he may form his own conclusion with a full knowledge of the arguments from all sides.

Opinions of the Leading Experts

Finally, that the subject may be completely covered, an effort has been made to secure the opinions of all the leading players of the present day, and some of the masters of recent generations. With such a consensus of expert opinion before him, the reader should have the best help that written instruction on the game can furnish.

Some of the Ground Books Have Covered

There have been many books written on lawn tennis, but few of them have contained any very complete instruction on the methods of playing the game. We have had plenty of its history and its records of champions—this ground has been fully covered. There have also been a number of books for beginners on the rudimentary principles of play, and one or two for advanced players, but these are rare, and there are practically no works that include both the novice and the expert. It is intended that this volume shall fill this gap if possible.

R. F. and H. L. Doherty published in both England and America a rather instructive volume,

The Dohertys' Book on the Game

but it was far from complete. They treated the subject very generally and modestly stated their own preferences, laying down some rules without expounding theories or explaining principles. Even the Dohertys themselves differed on many points, and their book is curiously divided against itself, expressing two individual opinions on some disputed points.

Meyers' Book Broad and Thorough

"The Complete Lawn Tennis Player," published in London by A. Wallis Meyers, fully bears out its title and treats the subject more exhaustively than any other volume in our libraries. Mr. Meyers goes into the subject thoroughly and with technical knowledge and breadth of view that is very instructive. His views are both sound and broad, and his viewpoint is not confined to English theories.

Dewhurst Concise and Direct

In America, the best books have been Dr. E. B. Dewhurst's "Science of Lawn Tennis," and a previous volume on "Lawn Tennis" by the present writer. Dr. Dewhurst's volume is very readable and instructive, furnishing a more concise handbook on the game than anything else published on this side of the water. He is short, crisp, to the point and wastes no words in showing the young player how to learn the intricacies of the game.

The previous volume of mine, published in 1904, was rather a complete treatise, including historical, instructive and statistical chapters on the game in all parts of the world. Methods and players have changed during the last decade in many respects and ideas are likely to alter in such a period. However, though a close student of

Paret's First Book Requires Few Corrections

lawn tennis at all times during the interim and for fifteen years before the first book appeared, I have not found many points of instruction that require material correction. If I repeat many of the same ideas and theories in the present volume it is only because I believe them to be as sound to-day as they were ten years ago.

Increased Value of American Service

The value of the American twist service has heavily increased since its early days, and on further study I should be inclined now to modify the advice given in my first book for a young player not to be diverted into too much devotion to that particular play. But I still doubt the wisdom of sacrificing any great efforts in acquiring the delivery, since it is becoming so commonly used that its novelty is wearing off, and the attack loses much of its terror when its secret is well understood.

Vaile's Work Handicapped by Prejudice

P. A. Vaile has published several books on the game both here and in England, but the value of his work has been seriously handicapped by the extremes to which he carries the particular prejudices he has formed, notably his aversion to the English grip and preference for the rolling backhand lift stroke used more here than abroad. Personal egotism and a narrow point of view has robbed his writings of much of the good they might otherwise have had.

Mr. Vaile's rash indulgence in the once popular pastime of "twisting the lion's tail" engendered many enemies in England, and F. W. Payn, an English player of no mean skill both in literature and on the court, published three

Payn's Three Attacks on Vaile

separate volumes aimed at refuting Mr. Vaile's criticisms and upholding the orthodox English traditions. Unfortunately, Mr. Payn rushed to the other extreme. He took only the English point of view, ignoring entirely American and Australian ideas that have been accepted as sound by other English authorities. His work was retroactive, all modern progressive ideas except the American service being discarded and disapproved.

Kidson Sheds Light from Australia

"Lawn Tennis in Australia," by R. M. Kidson, contains much sound light on the game from an expert who has seen it played in all sections of the world. Without denying English and Americans their full share in the development of the game, Mr. Kidson still believes the Australasian experts to be the king pins of the court, and possibly not without good reason.

Little's the Best Book for Experts

There have been many books of varying value for the beginner, but the literature for the tournament player of experience amounts to little or nothing. Fortunately, what it lacks in quantity is more than made up in quality. For any experienced player who wants to advance his skill by studying the finer points of the game as laid down by an expert, I could not do better than recommend Raymond D. Little's "Tennis Tactics." Without exception, this is the best work on the advanced principles of the game that has been published, and although rather a small volume, it contains a more liberal education in advanced methods of play than all the rest of tennis literature put together. Little gives scant attention to

first principles, and his book is only for experienced players.

Wilding More Personal Than Instructive

A. F. Wilding published a book entitled "On the Court and Off" a few years ago that included some valuable instruction in its pages, but it was largely taken up with reminiscences of the author and general comments on play rather than a systematic effort to furnish instruction.

Order in Which Points Should Be Taken Up

The oft-repeated advice to "get the ball back over the net" appears very wise and may furnish a good maxim for beginners, but it sounds the key-note for only one phase of the play. To learn the game in correct order, one should take up (1) the grip of the racket, (2) making the strokes, (3) use of the feet, legs, eyes, arms and body weight, (4) placing the ball, (5) technique of the twist or rotation of the ball, (6) position in court, (7) angles of attack and defence, (8) strategy, and (9) deception and counter deception.

Breadth of the Game's Possibilities

The deeper one goes into the game, the more fascinated will he become by the range of possibilities offered for healthy exercise, even to exhaustive effort if it is preferred; for foot work, arm work, body work and for headwork. Every muscle of the human body is called on. Yet it is not a game of physical effort only; the mind should be as active as the body when playing a close match.

Perfect Balance of the Strokes

This is largely due to the perfect balance of power which exists among skillful players. As between net-play and base-line play, between the smash and the lob, the pass and the volley, the

BEALS C. WRIGHT

ROBERT D. WRENN

The Waiting Positions of Two Old Masters.

Note the crouched position with the racket balanced in the free hand for quick action. Wright's footwork seems defective in this picture because his heels are on the ground, but he is apparently shifting his left foot for a forehand drive. Both of these players are left-handed.

R. NORRIS WILLIAMS, 2D

FREDERICK G. ANDERSON

Good and Bad Form Contrasted in the Same Stroke.

Note Williams's elbow free from the body and Anderson's pressed close against the side, cramping the swing; the left arm lifeless with Anderson and used as a counter-balance with Williams. Most of all, note the position of the feet; Williams is shifting his weight from right to left as he strikes, while Anderson before he hits the ball has already shifted to his left foot, making the follow-through very limited.

service and the first return, even as between player and player the balance is so evenly divided that it takes only the slightest tilt of the scales to throw victory to one side or the other.

Any Guide Will Teach the Rules

I have assumed that the beginner who takes up this volume as a mentor for his first lessons in the game is already familiar with the rules and system of scoring. Any paper-covered guide will furnish these and they should be familiarized before the effort to learn the strokes of the game is begun.

II.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PLAY.

Study the Rudiments First

FOR THE BEGINNER, the novice who is taking up the game from the start, a few words of introductory advice will be useful, and this chapter should be read carefully by all young players before passing on to the more serious study of the game's intricacies that are covered in the other pages.

Select a New Racket Carefully

In selecting a racket, choose one with a small handle and preferably light in weight. Fourteen ounces is perhaps the best weight for a beginner, although a small man or a woman should learn the strokes with one weighing not over thirteen and one-half ounces, while a powerful man might prefer an ounce heavier even at the start. It is a simple matter to increase the weight of your first racket half an ounce or so when you are able to play the rudimentary strokes fairly well, and come to select your second racket. It will be found much easier to handle the lighter weight while learning the game.

Grip the Racket Tight and at the End

Always grip the racket tightly while in play and hold it by the extreme end. The manner in which to grip the racket is fully covered in the next chapter and it is unnecessary to go over the same ground here. Keep your eye always

on the ball, and watch it all the time in its flight. There are exceptions to this rule, to be sure, but they are only for experienced players.

Keep the Playing Arm Well Clear of the Body

Keep your playing arm well clear of the body, and avoid contracting the dangerous habit of playing with a bent elbow that brings your arm in close to the side. This fault cramps the swing of the racket, it cuts off the "follow-through" with the weight of the body, and it prevents the player from shortening his reach if the ball should bound slightly more in toward him than he expected.

Give the Ball Plenty of Room

Keep away from the ball also; give it plenty of room and then bend forward and out to meet it. Never make a stroke while moving backward, as this takes all the power out of the blow. Preferably, spring forward to meet the ball, and, bending with the swing of the arm, allow the body to "lean" against the ball, so as to add the body's weight to the power of the stroke. Be moving forward when you actually hit the ball and keep every motion of the racket, arm and body in line with the ball's flight. All add to the power of the stroke, and help to make the ball go in the direction you want it to travel.

Loosen Up and Don't Use the Muscles Too Much

Loosen up the joints in making the swing. The stiffness shown in most of the poor strokes made by beginners comes generally from the very apparent effort to use the muscles too much. Good tennis players do not get their speed from extra muscular effort but from timing the swing properly, so that the momentum of the racket, rather than the muscular force back of it, drives

Stroke Should Be Like the Lash of a Whip

the ball harder. Compare the tennis stroke with the lash of a whip and you will get a fair idea of it. Extra strength does not make the whip strike a harder blow; momentum gives it the power.

Certain names have been given to the different strokes of the game which may not be understood by the beginner. A few words therefore may prevent a confusion of terms later on, and make the explanations clearer.

Names of the Different Strokes

The "ground-stroke" is made by striking the ball after it has bounded from the ground, and the "volley" before it has touched the ground, or "on the fly" as the baseball players say. Ground-strokes and volleys are divided into two general classes as "forehand" or "backhand," according to whether the ball is struck on the right side (by a right-handed player) or the left side.

Difference Between Forehand and Backhand

Forehand strokes are made with the striking-arm, or at least its shoulder, behind the ball when it is hit, and backhand strokes with the shoulder ahead of it, requiring a different position of the body and arm, and a different grip of the racket. In backhand play, the arm crosses somewhat in front of the body in making the stroke while it is entirely free in forehand play, which explains why it is almost invariably more difficult to make a backhand than a forehand stroke.

There are a number of other sub-divisions of the principle strokes. A "drive" is simply a ground-stroke made fast and low, and a "lob" the reverse of this, since it tosses the ball high up in the air and necessarily slow in order to fall inside

End of a Backhand Stroke

End of a Forehand Stroke

Two Examples of Brookes's Bad Form in Play.

Here are illustrations of the unorthodox form of Norman Brookes, which should make all young players hesitate before copying his methods. Note the close, cramped position of the legs in the forehand stroke, and the backward finish of the swing in the backhand stroke, with the weight on the rear foot.

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END OF THE FOREHAND

END OF THE BACKHAND

Finish of Champion Williams's Ground-Strokes.

Here are two examples of the ground-strokes of the champion, showing his style of finishing the swing. The high racket in the forehand shot indicates a marked top-spin, but the backhand stroke was evidently made without any spin or with under-cut.

the court. The lob can be made with either a ground-stroke or a volley, but it is almost invariably a ground-stroke.

Different Kinds of Volley Strokes

Among the different kinds of volleys are the "service," which is the first stroke in each series, made with a volley to put the ball into play; the "smash," the "stop-volley," and the "half-volley," which is, correctly speaking, not a volley at all, but a ground-stroke. The half-volley is made by striking the ball just after it rises from the ground, and as the ball has bounded it is really a ground-stroke.

The Smash and the Stop-Volley

The smash is a very hard volley made from a dropping ball which is intended to "kill" the ball (or put it out of play) by winning the point by speed rather than direction. The stop-volley is made by simply stopping the ball with the racket, instead of hitting it, and must be played from a position close to the net. There are many kinds of services, but these will be treated in a special chapter on this stroke, and the variations of the other strokes, as well as the methods of making them are fully treated further on in this volume.

Swing Around and Face the Ball

No matter on which side you make the stroke, you should swing around and face the ball, not the net. Assuming that you are right-handed, your right foot should be forward for a backhand stroke, and your left foot for the forehand stroke. The feet should be generally in the line that you are playing, not parallel with the net. In backhand strokes, never let the racket extend across in front of the body. Rather turn around to

face the ball and keep the right shoulder out free for a full swing.

Hit the Ball Between Knee and Hip

Wait until the ball reaches a height between the knee and the hip to hit it; if it bounds higher, move back a little and wait for it to come down to the better level to strike. Never hit the ball straight in front of you either; preferably keep it well off to one side or the other, or rather keep yourself off to one side of the ball.

Swing Back Long Before You Strike

Above all else, swing back well before you are ready to hit. Eighty per cent. of the poor strokes of beginners are spoiled by waiting until the ball has bounded before drawing back the racket, and then making a half stroke, like a push or a jab at the ball, to make up for lost time. Always swing the racket back before you think it is necessary, and keep swinging back earlier until you find a distinct pause at the end of the back-swing before beginning the stroke. It is better to err at this end than to cut the swing short by beginning too late.

Bend Forward on the Toes to Meet the Ball

Avoid standing too upright in play. It is better to bend the body forward a good deal. The knees should be bent and the weight carried on the toes all the time while the ball is in play. While waiting for the next stroke, crouch slightly so as to be ready to spring instantly in any direction, and balance the racket across in front of the body, holding the "splice" of the frame in the idle hand, so as to start the swing quicker when it is known where the next stroke is to be made.

Don't stand still to watch the result of a

Don't Stand and Watch Your Shot

stroke after hitting the ball, but start at once to get back to the safest position for the next shot. It is very easy to be caught out of position in this way, and the ball can easily be placed out of reach by your opponent if this rule is not carefully observed. Go back to the center of the base-line after each stroke is made, until you have learned something of the principles of position play and court tactics.

Prepare for the Next Stroke Always

No matter how well you may have made your stroke, even though it ought to end the play, always assume that the ball is coming back again, and prepare for the next stroke. It is one of the most frequent errors of beginners to watch the result of a good stroke from the side of the court and an unexpected return catches them napping.

Don't Try to Hit the Ball Hard at First

Don't try to hit the ball hard at the start. Be content to hit it slowly at first until you are able to keep it in court regularly and not put too many returns into the net and beyond the lines. Don't try to volley until the ground strokes are well understood. Play the ball into the back of the other court in preference, and practice this "length," as the experienced players call it, until you are able to keep your returns always back of the service-line of the other court.

Taking the steps in proper order, first learn to play the forehand stroke, and then the back-hand stroke. When both of these are mastered, practice them until you are able to make the ball bound back of the opposite service-line nearly every time. Then practice directing your strokes toward one side or the other, which is the art of

placing, until you can direct the ball fairly well toward either side selected.

Correct Your Weakness by Practice

Most players are weaker in making backhand strokes than in forehand play, and this generally comes from neglecting to develop the backhand. In the early stages, the bad habit is contracted of running around a doubtful ball so as to play it on the easier forehand side, when it would have been better to use a backhand stroke for the shot. Avoid this error, and select for every stroke the style that is most convenient, even though it be the more difficult way to hit the ball. Above all else, practice the backhand stroke intentionally to overcome this common weakness and you will be doubly rewarded later on, as a study of the chapter on position play will convince any student of the game.

Learn to Lob at Once for Defence

Next, learn to lob. If the opponent tries to run up to the net to volley the ball, it is best to lob the ball over his head until you become expert enough to hit the ground-strokes fast and accurately, and then you can learn to pass him at the sides without playing out of court.

Perfect Ground Strokes Before You Try Volley

Volleying can be taken up after the ground-strokes are fairly well controlled. Running up to the net successfully is a very difficult part of the game and it is better not to run in at all unless it is done intelligently. Study the theory of the game and learn when it is safe to volley before you try it, and even then do not overdo the matter by trying to volley all the time. The average beginner thinks that every volley should be a smash, which is far from correct. Hit even the volley

strokes slow until you have become fairly expert at the game.

Don't Try to Kill Every Ball in Reach

Don't try to kill everything you get your racket on; the best players are content to keep the ball going back fast into the other man's court, and kill only occasionally. Safe play is always the best for young players, and generally the winning style for all but the most expert tournament players at that.

Anticipate Your Opponent's Next Play

Try to anticipate the opponent's intentions, and learn in advance where the next ball will be played. If you watch his movements closely, you will soon learn to anticipate the next play, and start in the right direction to meet the ball the instant it has left your opponent's racket. Be ready to start at once and do not hesitate which way to turn until it is too late to reach the ball and return it.

Simplest Strokes Are Most Effective

Don't waste your time and ruin your play by trying fancy strokes. The simplest are the most effective, and the young player who wants to make slashing strokes and hit the ball hard all the time is sure to make a failure of it quickly. Remember, it takes many years to learn to play the game really well, and learn to walk before you try to run. The man who keeps the ball coming back over the net and does not make errors will win every time from him who tries to "show off" to the gallery constantly.

Above all, be patient and persevering. It takes many thousands of practice strokes to learn to play one properly. The best way to get this practice is to find a barn door or a blank wall of some

Above All, Have Patience and Persevere

kind with a fairly level stretch of ground in front of it, and knock the ball up against this by the hour. This will give the best possible practice in learning strokes and will also teach the beginner a lot about the bound of the ball and its flight through the air. Even expert players find this a splendid method of training the eye.

III.

GRIP OF THE RACKET

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

The Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Always hold the racket tight in the hand; as the stroke is made, increase the tightness of this grasp.*
2—*Hold the racket as near the end as possible.*
3—*The grip should allow the face of the racket always to be at right angles with the flight of the ball, both sidewise and endwise.*
4—*The grip should be shifted through one-quarter of a circle for the backhand, and the thumb should then be braced against the handle parallel with it.*
5—*Use a small-handled racket and avoid artificial grips on the handle.*

Two Schools of the Grip and Much Controversy

THERE has been controversy over the best methods of gripping the racket almost since the birth of the game. There have been two distinct schools, each of which has its merits, and beyond these a half dozen eccentric styles of holding the racket have earned more or less success.

But while we find that certain methods of gripping have apparent advantages for certain strokes, they lose in other strokes as much or more than is gained. It is not practicable to change the

Some Holds Good for Only One Stroke

hold for every stroke, so some set style must be adopted that gives the most advantage for all the strokes required.

A slight shifting, for instance, in the position of the hand gives a much better hold for the rolling backhand drive, but only for this stroke, and so it is available only for those players who use this stroke regularly. If this is adopted, then other strokes on the backhand side must be adapted to this hold or suffer in consequence.

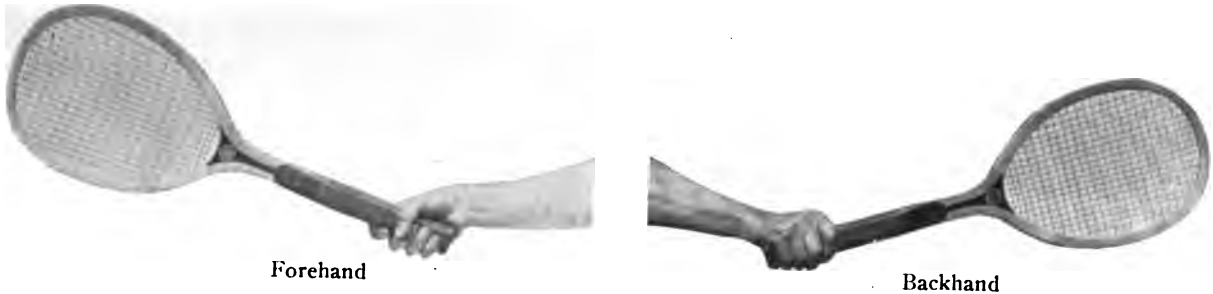
Should the Grip Be Shifted for the Backhand?

The first mark of divergence in the two theories, which have been generally referred to as the English and American schools, comes in the question of whether the grip should or should not be changed for the backhand stroke — that is, whether the grip of the handle should remain unchanged when the arm is shifted from one side of the body to the other.

Baddeley's Unchanged Grasp

Wilfred Baddeley, one of the early English masters of the game, and one of the earliest of the English writers whose work became authoritative, played himself and advocated others playing with an unchanged grip. Heathcote also held the same views and this style was at first followed by a large proportion of the British players. It is still upheld to this day by some of the present experts on the other side.

However, American ideas differ here, the belief on this side of the Atlantic being that a shifting of the grip in playing the backhand stroke is an advantage. This theory is firmly held in this country by practically all of our best players, very few holding the English views.



Forehand Backhand

Typical American Grips.

Forehand Backhand

Typical English Grips.

Straight Out-Twist

American Twist

Reverse Twist

Three Grips for Overhead Services.

Doherty Brothers Favored the Shift

Indeed, the same ideas have become almost universal in Australia, and English players are also coming steadily around to this view, a large proportion of them even now using the shifting grip. The Dohertys in their book declare that "there is no doubt that it is better to change the grip a little at lawn tennis" but "the less change the better." Yet even the Dohertys themselves differed as to how much change there should be, and they did not grip the racket in the same way.

When two such masters as this, playing together constantly, disagree on such a vital point, how shall anyone decide it?

Change Becomes Almost Mechanical

The shifting of the grip from the forehand to the backhand position and back again seems a bigger undertaking than it really amounts to in actual play. To the novice this appears to require close attention, but he will soon find that he never has to look at the racket as the shift is made. In waiting for the ball anyway, the splice of the racket should be balanced in the left hand and the touch of the left fingers always shows which way the head is turned, if any doubt could exist as to this.

Shift About One-Quarter of a Circle

In a previous volume on the game, the present author stated that the change in the hold of the racket should be almost if not quite a quarter of a circle. It is possible that this may be a trifle too much, but among the best players, certainly those on this side of the Atlantic, the shift is very nearly this amount. A glance at the answers of the leading players (a few pages further on) to the test

question covering this point will convince any doubter of this.

Should the Thumb Support the Handle?

The next point of divergence among those who do shift the grip raises the question whether the thumb should be used up the handle in backhand play or not. Among the players who show the best form, the great majority do use their thumbs as a support in making the backhand stroke, and I cannot doubt the wisdom of recommending this style.

Brookes Does Not Use His Thumb Up

Against this opinion, however, which is held by Wilding, by the Dohertys, by Williams, by Larned, and by the great majority of other expert players, we find Brookes, with his eccentric grip which no authority recommends (not even Wilding or Kidson, of Australia), McLoughlin and a few others.

Agreed then that the best advice favors shifting the grip and using the thumb up the handle, what then should be the actual grasp for the greatest power and freedom?

English Arms Bent Like Scythes

The distinction between the English and the American strokes is most noticeable in the position of the elbow and wrist. What may be distinctively called the English grip requires a low elbow and the racket head above the wrist. The position of the hand as it holds the racket forces this position of the arm and the rigid, bent elbow, while the whole arm moves as one crooked handle, like a scythe.

While the position of the arm and wrist cannot truly be called the grip of the racket, nevertheless they have been the direct result of the grip.

They Are Gradually Coming to Use the Thumb

Originally, the English held their rackets with an unchanged grip for the backhand stroke, with the thumb wrapped around the handle, and this grip has forced on them this awkward position of the arm. More recently, English experts have accepted American ideas and there has been a steady change going on for the last ten or fifteen years in favor of shifting the grasp and using the thumb up the handle, either straight or diagonally, for the backhand stroke.

The Dohertys Used Their Thumbs Up

But this use of the thumb has not altered the arm position entirely in England, and we find that the Doherty brothers and other advanced players have shifted their grips and used their thumbs up their handles for the backhand strokes, and yet with their rackets held in the typical old English position with the elbow and wrist low.

Vaile Criticises English Backhand

Vaile criticised this angle persistently and contended that the English style had ruined all the backhand strokes seen in Britain because of its lack of flexibility and freedom. He did not take any strong position, however, regarding the use of the thumb. More recently over here, Douglass, an American professional, has publicly advocated a return to the original method of wrapping the thumb around the handle of the racket for the backhand in order to secure greater control and accuracy in the stroke.

One strong argument is advanced against using the thumb up the handle which must be admitted to be sound. In using this grip, we unquestionably leave an opening between the tips of the fingers and thumb, which has a tendency

Wrapping the Thumb Gives a Tighter Grasp

to permit the racket to turn in the grasp when it is hit slightly off the centre by a fast flying ball. It is true that the grasp is much firmer and better able to resist this turning pressure when the thumb is wrapped around the handle, overlapping the fingers, and the large muscles of the fleshy part of the hand are brought to bear on its surface.

But against this advantage that Brookes gains by his hold there are two or three distinct disadvantages which cannot be overlooked. When weighed against the single advantage conceded to the other style, one cannot help feeling that they compel the selection of the prevailing method of the great majority of the best players today.

Grip Lacks Resistance Without Thumb

If the thumb is wrapped around the handle, the racket loses much of its powerful resistance to the impact of the ball in playing a fast backhand stroke. Hold the racket with the thumb up and press against it with the other hand as though a ball were striking its face, and then try the same experiment with the thumb wrapped around the handle, and you will see at once the difference in the resistance offered to the flight of the ball. The handle settles back naturally into the weak crotch between the thumb and first finger, unless the thumb supports it along the handle, or with side pressure that can be used when the elbow swings low.

Bent Elbow or Wrist Only Alternative

Without this support the English position of the arm is almost unavoidably forced on you. The elbow must be dropped lower, the wrist stiffened to brace against the blow, and all flexibility

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Thumb Straight Up the Handle

Thumb Across the Handle

Thumb Around the Handle

Three Grips for the Backhand

THOMAS C. BUNDY

W. MERRILL HALL

Two Methods of Returning the Service.

Bundy's peculiar hold of the racket is illustrated in this picture, and his chop-stroke and "thumb-around" grip contrast strongly with the clean-cut style of Hall.

is gone. An unnatural bend in the wrist is the only other alternative to the low elbow to overcome the weakness of this grip, and in either case, you have a stroke handicapped by a bend in the striking arm that weakens the power of the blow. There can hardly be a question that the straighter the arm, wrist and handle the more direct will be the blow.

Wrist Flexibility Comes With Thumb Up

In addition to this drawback to the thumb-around-the-handle grip for the backhand, there is also the lack of flexibility that goes with it. With the thumb support, the wrist is free for the most delicate and flexible movements that control the direction of the ball during the stroke. The highest art of placing depends on this fine control, and it is generally increased by the flexible wrist that the thumb-grip permits.

Delicate Placing Greatly Helped

In the last fraction of a second before the stroke is completed, you often find the opponent shifting his position or you have other reason to alter slightly the direction of a delicately placed stroke, perhaps an effort to pass a dangerous volleyer at the net. Then the thumb-up grip is a wonderful help in this control, while if the thumb is wrapped around the handle and the elbow is carried low or the wrist bent in consequence, it is very much more difficult to change the direction without exposing the intention and advertising the plan to a watchful antagonist.

English Backhand Safer, but Gives Back-Spin

For defensive play, for sheer safety, the thumb-around plan, even with its consequent arm position, is safer and more reliable, but it limits the attack, and allows no such brilliant possibilities

of control in the attacking strokes as the other style. The tendency of this grip is also to bevel back the face of the racket, giving the ball a backward spin or "drag" which is inclined to slow down its flight. The thumb is used with side pressure to increase the power of the blow but it cannot guide the racket so well in this way.

Better to Keep Racket "Open" at All Times

The prevalent style, however, keeps the face of the racket "open"—that is, not bevelled—when the stroke is made, and personally I would advise all young players to grip the racket during the swing so that its face is always at right angles to the flight intended for the ball, both as regards the latitude and the longitude of the racket's head.

Extend Handle as Far as Possible

As to the position of the hand on the racket, I should always advise as long a handle as possible. The racket should be extended as far as possible from the wrist, and the best players allow the leather at the end to come snug up against the back of the hand. Personally, I have found it a great help to depend on this bulge of the leather to keep the racket from slipping in the grasp.

Weakness of the Short Grasp

Here again, Brookes's style is unorthodox and eccentric, since he uses a much shorter grip than other experts. Beside lessening the leverage that is secured for the stroke by shortening the length of the handle, there is also the danger that the end of the racket extending out behind the hand will interfere with the free play of the wrist in making the stroke.

The more one studies the intricate question of grips in lawn tennis, the more he may be forced

Wilding's Sage Conclusion

to the sage conclusion of Wilding, who remarks in his book: "For the man who says that only one grip is right and all the others are wrong I have little use. Dynamic essays and diagrams which affect to demonstrate the futility of that hold or the absolute perfection of this only bore me. I've played against too many players in all parts of the world, players who employ distinctive grips and make fine shots with them, not to realize how absurd it is to be dogmatic in this matter."

Few Experts Recommend Loose Grip

There is also some divergence of opinion as to the tightness of the grip. Some few experts have recommended a comparatively loose grip, but I cannot agree with such advice. Meyers says that the grip should be relaxed until the last second before the impact is made, and thinks that a continuously tight grip tends to shorten the backswing. Mahony believed in a comparatively loose grip also, but the weight of opinion is against these two experts.

Tight Hold Imperative as Ball Is Hit

It seems to me imperative to maintain a tight hold on the racket at all times, and I doubt if it is any more difficult to shift the grip, as some believe, if the grasp is tight before the shift is made. A loose grip is a source of constant trouble. The racket has a tendency to turn in the hand slightly and it is a very difficult matter to twist it back straight again while making the stroke.

In any case, the grip must be very tight at the instant the stroke is made, for, even with the best of aim, it is not unusual even with good players to hit the ball slightly off the centre of the stringing. When this occurs, there is a distinct

tendency to turn the racket in the grasp, and of course this ruins the stroke unless the hold is tight enough to offset this tendency and to prevent the slightest relaxation in the firmness of the striking surface when the blow is delivered.

Lowe's Eccentric Hold

Some eccentric styles of gripping the racket are overcome by an unnatural position of arm or body during the stroke, but this seems like correcting an error by another error. Arthur H. Lowe, one of the English International players grips his racket in such a peculiar way that the conventional style of hitting the ball was quite out of the question. This was overcome by a bend of the body and a twist of the arm that was most ungainly.

Peculiar Grips for the Different Services

For the service, new problems come into view. Here somewhat different grips are required for the twist services, which are the natural result of the angle needed to impart the twist called for by these deliveries. The American twist and the reverse American deliveries have each peculiar holds of their own which will be treated in another chapter under the head of the service.

Large Handles Prevent a Tight Grasp

It is most important that the racket selected by a beginner should not be too large in the handle. Large handles make it difficult to grip the racket as tightly as it should be held, and the tendency to turn in the grasp, especially in backhand play, generally indicates that the handle is too large. Just what the best size is must be governed of course by the size of the hand that is to grip it. It is safe to say, however, that the handle should be small enough at least for the

JUST AFTER HITTING THE BALL

START OF THE STROKE

Norman Brookes Making Forehand Stroke.

These pictures illustrate some of the elements of bad form, despite which the great Australian is still a marvellous player. Before the ball is hit the weight is already forward on his right foot (Brookes is left-handed), and in the other picture the feet show almost exactly the same position after the ball has been hit.

FINISH OF THE SWING

HITTING THE BALL

Maurice McLoughlin's Peculiar Forehand Stroke.

Note the defective grip and elbow close to the side, cramping the freedom of the swing; also the wrong position of the feet. McLoughlin depends too much on wrist action, using an upward drag that brings the racket over the shoulder at the end of his stroke.

grip to reach completely around, and the thumb to overlap the middle finger enough to cover the entire first joint. If your racket will not allow this much overlap it is too large to handle properly.

Artificial Grips a Matter of Taste

Many artificial grips have been made for lawn tennis rackets, and their use is more a matter of taste than precept. If your hand perspires freely while you are playing, the handle may become too slippery to be tightly held, but there should be a slight moisture in the hand on a plain wood handle to prevent its slipping. The general custom is to roughen or "comb" a cedar handle and this usually furnishes the best grip.

Wrapping the Handle Often Done

The use of adhesive plaster or tire-tape wrapped around the handle has been favored by many expert players, as this furnishes an additional roughness, and when the hand becomes warm with play the tape softens enough to offer a firm grasp. Sometimes, however, this becomes too sticky in hot weather, and I have seen some players severely handicapped during match play because a handle wrapped in such a way stuck to the hand and made it difficult to shift hastily for the backhand stroke without close attention to the movement.

Natural Cedar Handle Generally Best

Resin, twine-wrapping and even cork and rubber covers for the handle have been tried, but as a rule experienced players have discarded all of these devices and gone back to the rough-combed cedar handles as the best for all purposes.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Do you advocate tight or loose grip of racket?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Grip varies.
T. C. BUNDY: Tight at moment of impact.
K. H. BEHR: Fairly tight.

Should the Grip Be Tight or Loose?

F. B. ALEXANDER: Loose grip except at moment of impact of ball on racket.
R. D. LITTLE: Firm.
H. H. HACKETT: Tight.
J. C. PARKE: Tight.
C. P. DIXON: Tight as a rule.
R. L. MURRAY: Tight.
G. M. CHURCH: Loose grip.

Few Favor Loose Grip

W. M. WASHBURN: Grip tight at moment of impact.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Loose.
CLARENCE HOBART: Quite tight.
E. B. DEWHURST: Tight.
J. R. STRACHAN: Tight grip.
C. R. GARDNER: Tight.
A. S. DABNEY: Tight.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Not too tight.
F. C. INMAN: Tight.
W. F. JOHNSON: Loose.
N. W. NILES: Medium.
T. R. PELL: Tight.
ROBERT LEROY: Tight.

Some Tighten Up as They Strike

A. M. SQUAIR: Firm but not squeezing during the stroke. Loose between strokes.
G. F. TOUCHARD: Loose until moment of impact.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: Varies.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: Moderately tight.
W. M. HALL: Tight.

RICHARD HARTE: Mediumly tight to prevent slipping. *Necessary to Prevent Slipping*

DEAN MATHEY: Tight grip.

R. C. SEAVER: Fairly tight.

G. C. SHAFER: Tighten.

S. H. VOSHELL: Loose until contact with ball; then firm.

E. H. WHITNEY: Loose until ball is struck.

I. C. WRIGHT: Tight.

W. C. GRANT: Tight at second of impact.

If your grip varies, on which strokes do you relax?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Service. *On Which Strokes Do You Relax?*

K. H. BEHR: On short angle shots off the ground.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Service and sometimes on volley.

H. H. HACKETT: Stop volley only.

J. C. PARKE: No variation.

C. P. DIXON: Varies very little if anything; relax on short cross strokes.

R. L. MURRAY: Relax on stop volleys at the net and when changing grip.

G. M. CHURCH: Stop volleys.

W. M. WASHBURN: None.

CLARENCE HOBART: Doesn't.

E. B. DEWHURST: Only for drop volley.

A. S. DABNEY: Serving (a bit looser).

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Loosest on serve.

F. C. INMAN: None.

W. F. JOHNSON: To opponent's forehand.

N. W. NILES: Somewhat tighter on volleys except stop volleys. *Most Players Relax on Stop Volleys*

T. R. PELL: None.

ROBERT LEROY: On gentle drives and lobs.

A. M. SQUAIR: Firm on all strokes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: It doesn't vary appreciably.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Volley.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Soft block shots and slow passing strokes.

Seaver Relaxes on Backhand

W. M. HALL: Chops short over net.
RICHARD HARTE: Certain net chops.
DEAN MATHEY: Relax only on stop volleys.
R. C. SEAVER: On my backhand.
G. C. SHAFER: Tighten on all.
S. H. VOSHELL: Little tighter on overhead.
E. H. WHITNEY: Relax on all chop strokes.
I. C. WRIGHT: None.

How near the end of the handle does the ball of your hand rest?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: End of handle on outer part of the ball of the hand (majority of strokes); sometimes slightly shorter.

Bundy Uses a Shortened Handle

T. C. BUNDY: I use a racket shortened three-quarters of an inch, hence grip at extreme end.

K. H. BEHR: I hold my racket at the very end, except for some volleys.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Against leather.

R. D. LITTLE: My hand rests against the leather guard at the end of handle.

H. H. HACKETT: At the extreme end.

I. C. WRIGHT: One-half inch.

J. C. PARKE: Touching the leather.

C. P. DIXON: About two inches.

R. L. MURRAY: Almost at the end.

Church Uses Short Grip, but Admits Error

G. M. CHURCH: About three inches from the end, but I consider that my grip is wrong and that the nearer the grip is to the end of the handle the better.

W. M. WASHBURN: The heel of my hand rests on the butt of the racket.

ELIA FOTTRELL: On the leather on end of handle.

CLARENCE HOBART: Extreme end.

E. B. DEWHURST: The leather piece is well clear of the hand.

J. R. STRACHAN: About half an inch.

C. R. GARDNER: At the very end.

A. S. DABNEY: About two inches. This gives more control.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: About one-half inch.

F. C. INMAN: Firm grip close to the leather.

W. F. JOHNSON: One inch.

N. W. NILES: On the leather end, except in serving, when over the end.

Most Players Touch the Leather at End

T. R. PELL: About two inches.

ROBERT LEROY: Just touching the leather band round the end of the handle.

A. M. SQUAIR: My whole hand is just above the leather button.

G. F. TOUCHARD: The extreme end.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: One-half inch from end of racket.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: I should say about two inches from end.

W. M. HALL: Touching, except for volleying and sometimes serving; then about one and one-half inches up.

Hall Shortens Grip for the Volley

RICHARD HARTE: Heel resting against the edge of the leather.

DEAN MATHEY: I hold my racket within one-half inch to one inch from end.

R. C. SEAVER: At the end always, but this I believe is not correct when playing net.

G. C. SHAFER: I leave about an inch of handle free, i. e., I choke the bat.

S. H. VOSHELL: On the leather end of handle.

E. H. WHITNEY: The ball of my hand is about an inch and a half from end. My grip is very near the end of the racket.

Do you change your grip for the forehand and backhand?

Should Grip Be Changed?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.

T. C. BUNDY: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.

R. D. LITTLE: Yes.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

Englishmen Report Unchanged Grip

J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: No.
R. L. MURRAY: Yes.
G. M. CHURCH: Yes.
W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.
CLARENCE HOBART: Yes.
E. B. DEWHURST: Yes.
J. R. STRACHAN: Yes.
C. R. GARDNER: Yes.
A. S. DABNEY: Yes.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.

Nearly Every American Player Shifts

F. C. INMAN: A little.
W. F. JOHNSON: Yes.
N. W. NILES: Yes.
T. R. PELL: Yes.
ROBERT LEROY: Always.
A. M. SQUAIR: Very slightly.
G. F. TOUCHARD: Yes.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: Sometimes.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.
W. M. HALL: Yes.
RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

Mathey in Doubt About the Shift

DEAN MATHEY: I am myself debating whether to change grips or not. Until last year I did not change at all.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.
G. C. SHAFER: Yes.
S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.
E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.
I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.
W. C. GRANT: Yes.

Do you use your thumb up the handle on the backhand?

Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.
T. C. BUNDY: No.
K. H. BEHR: For some strokes and others not.

F. B. ALEXANDER: No.
R. D. LITTLE: Yes.
H. H. HACKETT: Yes.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: No.
R. L. MURRAY: Yes.
G. M. CHURCH: No.
W. M. WASHBURN: No.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.
CLARENCE HOBART: Yes.
E. B. DEWHURST: Yes.
J. R. STRACHAN: No.
C. R. GARDNER: Yes.
A. S. DABNEY: Yes.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.
F. C. INMAN: No.
W. F. JOHNSON: Yes.
N. W. NILES: Yes.
T. R. PELL: Yes.
ROBERT LEROY: Yes, decidedly.
A. M. SQUAIR: No.
G. F. TOUCHARD: No.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.
W. M. HALL: Yes.
RICHARD HARTE: Yes.
R. C. SEAVER: No.
G. C. SHAFER: Yes.
S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.
E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.
I. C. WRIGHT: No.
W. C. GRANT: Yes.

Large Majority Use the Thumb Up Handle

LeRoy Very Positive on this Point

Describe the grip you use for forehand and backhand.

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Face of racket perpendicular to ground, that is, face of racket is up and down. I hit the ball straight in the middle of racket and don't cover the ball like Mac. (Maurice E. McLoughlin—ED.)

Difficult to Describe Grip

T. C. BUNDY: Cannot state without photograph.

K. H. BEHR: Impossible.

R. D. LITTLE: Front of hand facing forward for forehand. Side of hand for backhand. Thumb back of handle.

What is an "Ordinary American Grip"?

H. H. HACKETT: Ordinary American grip.

J. C. PARKE: Oval-shaped handle set firmly into V between thumb and forefinger.

C. P. DIXON: Thumb over.

R. L. MURRAY: In backhand, I support the racket with my thumb along the handle.

G. M. CHURCH: Rather loose grip with the backhand a little looser, thumb across in both cases.

J. R. STRACHAN: In making a forehand stroke, the ball of my hand is on the wide part of the handle and in making a backhand, it is on the narrow part.

C. R. GARDNER: A la Pell, I think.

Dabney's Good Description

A. S. DABNEY: For forehand, grasp the racket naturally as you would grasp a hand mirror. Have the fingers slightly separated, the forefinger more so than the others. The web between the thumb and forefinger about in line with the side of the racket. Backhand: Thumb up the handle, fingers close together.

F. C. INMAN: Firm, comfortable grip, a slight shift from fore to backhand.

W. F. JOHNSON: Forehand: Fingers on top of handle with thumb over forefinger. Backhand: Knuckles on top with thumb stretched up handle.

N. W. NILES: Forehand: Fingers around with forefinger somewhat along handle from others. Second knuckle of thumb about the back or outside corner edge of handle. Backhand: Fingers around handle except thumb, latter flat along back of handle, pointed slightly down.

Fingers and Thumb Parallel for Forehand

ROBERT LEROY: My forehand grip has the fingers and thumb parallel, which is held with the face at right angles to the ground. The head of the racket is held only a trifle lower than the handle. As I hit my grip be-

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THOMAS C. BUNDY

The Chop-Stroke Played by an Expert.

This shows a splendid example of the chop-stroke as played by one of its strongest exponents. Note the downward angle of the blow from above the shoulder, the crouched position and the cramped stance that limits the body swing. Bundy and Wallace Johnson are the best players yet produced of this type.

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WILLIAM J. CLOTHIER

Forehand Stroke With Moderate Top-Spin.

With the racket finishing over the right shoulder, as shown in this picture, the ball gets a moderate forward twist. This is the happy medium between the straighter strokes of Larned and the extreme top-spin shown by McLoughlin.

comes tighter. Backhand grip much the same except for the position of the thumb.

Several Try to Copy Pell's Backhand Grip

G. F. TOUCHARD: The only difference is in the position of the thumb which is midway between up and down and around the handle.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Impossible to describe on paper.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Forehand: Racket slightly bent forward. Backhand: Try to copy Pell's, the face of handle against the part of hand between thumb and first finger.

W. M. HALL: Racket and arm in straight line.

RICHARD HARTE: My hand is well spread out, the forefinger seeming to point the direction.

R. C. SEAVER: Hold the racket tight for forehand, and in changing to backhand, turn racket and hold loosely.

G. C. SHAFER: Thumb free on forehand, in use on backhand.

S. H. VOSHELL: Backhand thumb up handle.

Whitney Aims to Keep in the Same Plane

E. H. WHITNEY: I hold my racket so that racket and arm are both in the same plane. In changing from forehand to backhand, I turn the racket over half way so that both sides of the racket are used.

W. C. GRANT: Thumb wrapped around handle for forehand. Thumb up handle for backhand.

Does your grip shift from forehand to backhand more or less than one-quarter circle? How much less or more?

Most Experts Shift About One-Quarter of a Circle

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: More.

T. C. BUNDY: Little more.

K. H. BEHR: Don't know.

R. D. LITTLE: About one-quarter circle.

H. H. HACKETT: About that.

C. P. DIXON: Should say about one-eighth more. I take the ball rather low on backhand and with check cut.

R. L. MURRAY: Just about one-quarter.

G. M. CHURCH: A little more than one-quarter circle.

W. M. WASHBURN: It shifts about three-eighths of a circle, perhaps a little less.

ELIA FOTTRELL: I think about one-quarter circle.

CLARENCE HOBART: It shifts about one-eighth.

Dewhurst Disagrees with Most Others

E. B. DEWHURST: About one-eighth of a circle, 45 degrees. One-quarter of a circle is a right angle. No one changes this much.

J. R. STRACHAN: Just about 90 degrees.

C. R. GARDNER: About one-quarter.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes, about three-quarters of an inch in all.

F. C. INMAN: Yes, little less than ¼ circle.

W. F. JOHNSON: Grip changes very little.

N. W. NILES: Slightly more, barely enough to be called "more;" second knuckle of thumb is on corner in forehand and just over corner in backhand.

T. R. PELL: One-half circle, I think.

ROBERT LEROY: Almost a full quarter circle. Forehand, the back of my hand is at almost right angles to the ground. Backhand, it is exactly parallel with the ground.

Many Opinions on this Point

A. M. SQUAIR: Less than one-quarter circle. Practically more on backhand ground-strokes. Less than one-quarter on low backhand volleys, in fact not more than one-eighth on any backhand.

G. F. TOUCHARD: If the smooth side is used for forehand the rough side will be out for backhand.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: About same.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Just about a fourth.

W. M. HALL: About one-third.

RICHARD HARTE: Slightly more.

R. C. SEAVER: Full half circle.

G. C. SHAFER: One-eighth of circle.

S. H. VOSHELL: Just one-quarter.

E. H. WHITNEY: More.

I. C. WRIGHT: One-quarter circle.

W. C. GRANT: No.

IV.

EYES ON THE BALL

FOUR CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Keep your eyes on the ball from the beginning of the forward swing until the ball has been hit.*

2—*Look away from the ball during the stroke only after you have become a proficient player, and then only when in good practice.*

3—*Look back at the ball even then if you find you are hitting badly.*

4—*Against an expert, watch his eyes closely to discover which way he is aiming the ball.*

Impossible to Watch the Ball All the Time

IT IS obvious that it is impossible to keep your eyes on the ball all of the time during play, because you must devote some attention to your opponent's position in court. It is necessary to glance up occasionally, especially when moving about the court rapidly, in order to keep the height of the net clearly in mind, its distance from you, and the relative position of the lines of the court.

Without these details, you will be all at sea in placing the ball, and sometimes even in getting it over the net. If the other man runs up to volley the next return, you must know of his movements to make your next stroke a passing at-

Necessary to Watch Your Opponent

tempt or a lob; if he shifts his position far to one side or the other, that will govern the direction of your next stroke.

It is apparent therefore that you must look away from the ball frequently during play, and the question naturally arises just when you must centre all of the attention on the flying sphere so as to make a perfect stroke.

Ball Must Be Followed as It Approaches

As the ball approaches you, it must be watched closely until you are moderately certain where it will strike and have made your calculation as to where you should stand to meet it. At this point, many players take a quick glance at the opponent to get a last bulletin as to his movements and to finally adjust their own compass before steering the next stroke.

A fraction of a second is long enough to get this information and then all attention should be centered on the ball again to make the stroke you have resolved to try under the circumstances. Often it is necessary to make a final correction in the angle of the swing and the stroke. The ball rises on the bound, the racket comes forward to meet it, and the stroke is made.

Now, when should the player lift his eyes?

When Should the Player Lift His Eyes?

In golf, we are told by every master of the game, and repeatedly warned of the inviolability of this rule, that the ball must be clear away from the club before the eyes can be lifted, and most instructors demand that the eyes should watch the tee even after the ball has left it.

But in tennis, we shoot with closer aim than in golf. We have a broader striking surface and

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F. B. Alexander's Style of Forehand Ground-Stroke.

The position of the feet is rather unfortunate in this picture, the player evidently backing away from a close ball, but it illustrates well the peculiar style of swing used by Alexander. The racket drops low and far behind the player, whipping forward with a marked follow-through that gives the ball great speed, while its hidden back-swing conceals the direction well.

MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN

HOLCOMBE WARD

End of the Forehand Drop-Stroke.

Both of these former champions use a marked drop stroke in forehand play, and both are noticeably weak on the backhand. These pictures show the end of the swing with the racket over the left shoulder, which gives a sharp top spin to the ball.

Closer Aim Needed Than in Golf

we calculate more closely on the flight of the ball. It is very often a matter of inches rather than feet between success and failure in passing an opponent at the net. It seems almost impossible to calculate so nicely without looking at the spot aimed at, and I doubt if it can be or is done by experts.

Inconsistency of Written Rules

There is a curious inconsistency in all the written works of instruction on the game that I have never seen fully explained, yet which is quite reconcilable. Every authority with whose work I am familiar advises players to keep their eyes on the ball and makes no exception to this rule. Most of them lay great stress on this cardinal point, and perhaps with good reason— certainly so, in so far as they are prescribing for beginners at the game.

Few Experts See the Ball Struck

But the fact remains that hardly one expert player in a dozen follows the very rule that is urged so strongly, and this fact makes the beginner doubt the soundness of the advice he has just read. Instantaneous photographs of the best players in action, if they be taken at the right point during the stroke, generally show the eyes lifted and looking in the direction that the ball is intended to take.

Many Experiments Confirm Theory

I have made a hundred experiments to prove the correctness of this theory, which seems startling at first to most students of the game, who have been drilled from infancy to the theory of watching the ball at all times, and with scarcely an exception they have all verified my contention.

Beginner Must Not Look Up

For the beginner, it is absolutely essential that he watch the ball up to the very instant of impact. The chief anxiety in the early stages of learning lawn tennis is to hit the ball in the centre of the racket, to get away a clean stroke.

If the preliminary calculation to anticipate the bound of the ball has to be altered even slightly because of an uneven rebound or simply from the inexperience which has not yet taught the player to anticipate its flight with perfect accuracy, then it is only apparent at the last fraction of the second in which the ball is struck, and the sweep of the racket must be altered quickly.

Inexperience Demands Close Attention

As the novice grows more accustomed to this anticipation of the ball's flight, he becomes more certain to hit the ball with the centre of his racket, and gradually finds himself able to look away from it a fraction of a second before the impact. Then and not till then will his game improve in the next point of advancement, the ability to place the ball at will where he wishes.

Experts Suffer Most from Bad Bounds

In itself, watching the ball closely limits the power of attack, and this is true of experts as well as beginners. Few students of the game ever realize why it is that an expert player is more affected by uneven court surface and poor playing conditions than a novice, but I think they will find this in the habit he has formed of looking away from the ball before he strikes it.

Put your tournament expert on a poor court and the eccentric bound of the ball will make him concentrate his attention on the ball until the last second and his placing will suffer materially.

Ask any experienced player if he does not ease up on his stroke a little when he anticipates or gets a bad bound; ask him why he does that and he will tell you that the uncertainty throws him off.

Uncertain Bounds Keep Eyes from Looking Up

Well, that uncertainty kept his eyes longer on the ball than usual, and instead of placing his return within a foot of the side-line and six inches above the net, his concentration on the ball itself left him a little less certain of the direction of the side-line and the exact height of the net, so he was forced to play a little safer, letting the ball sail two feet over the net and three feet inside of the edge of the court.

Advantage Earned by Looking Up

If the player learns to take his eyes away from the ball before striking, he earns the great advantage of looking at the mark he is shooting for just as he strikes. The final twist of the wrist and the slight deflection of the muscles that let him control the ball with great accuracy, are only possible with the eye on the exact point at which he is directing his shot.

Does a billiard player look at the cue ball or the object ball? Does the bowler look at his ball or the head pin he is aiming for? Does your wing-shot look at the game or his gun? Does your baseball pitcher look at the ball he is throwing?

Baseball and Golf Are Different

The batter in baseball does look at the ball, and the golf player keeps his eye close on the little sphere, but neither of these tries to place the ball with such accuracy as does the tennis player, and if either could learn to look away

from the ball, he would be better able to do so.

Most Players Look at Their Targets

In golf, the player has no such control of the striking weapon, no such broad striking space and short handle as in tennis, while in baseball the blow must be much more closely aimed than in either of the other games. An inch off in the line of the bat's swing and the blow is ruined, while to add to the batsman's difficulties he is matched against the most expert control of an opposing pitcher, who is trying his best with almost marvelous skill to make the ball shoot in unknown and unnatural angles to avoid the bat. This accounts for the many missed efforts to hit the ball, or "strikes."

Whitman an Exception to the Custom

Perhaps the only really successful exception to the general custom of looking away from the ball among expert tennis players was Malcolm D. Whitman. He came nearer to keeping his eyes on the ball, or rather did keep them on the ball *longer,* than any other really great player whom I have seen. But Whitman's attack was far below his defence at all times. He did watch the ball almost to the point of impact, if not entirely so, and this fact made it extremely difficult to anticipate the direction of his passing strokes, although they were seldom so fast or so aggressively directed as the other great players of his time.

Experts Read Opponents' Eyes

Now we come to the result of this looking up before hitting which takes place among experts. Few tournament players attempt to anticipate the direction of their antagonists' placing by

watching the motions of the arm or of the racket alone.

On the contrary, they read the eyes of the other player.

His Eyes Show Direction

The direction in which your opponent looks as he makes his stroke will almost always give you a better line on where to expect the next attack than any motion of his racket or his arm. Long before the ball has left his racket the telltale eyes will almost invariably reveal his secret. Among expert players this is even more the rule than among ordinary players who watch the ball longer.

This Theory Proven in Several Ways

The average reader will doubt this statement, I anticipate, and I am therefore prepared to offer proof of it in advance of his distrust. Perhaps the most perfect proof that good players watch the eyes of their opponents, not their rackets, was furnished by Fred H. Hovey, who adopted a most skilful deception that conclusively proved this point.

Hovey's Clever Little Ruse

When drawn in toward the middle of the court on a short ball, with his opponent at the net, Hovey found it very easy to pass his man by the simple ruse of looking in one direction and placing the opposite way. The other man invariably jumped in the direction he looked and the ball sailed serenely past him on the opposite side.

The effect of this play is almost uncanny, as I discovered in playing against it many times. Even though I knew the deception, the strength of habit was so strong that the instant the eyes looked up toward the right, I found it impossible

Almost Always Good for an Ace

to avoid starting in that direction, and a dozen times the ball went past me on the other side.

Personally, I learned to use that little ruse and found it almost invariably good for an ace under conditions that allowed an easy pass, unless the opponent at the net guessed properly the direction of my attempt and jumped that way before the ball started. Playing the opposite way made the stroke less fast and close to the net and side-lines, but there was always plenty of room on that side for a slow pass.

Wright Deceived by Nisbet

Another proof that the expert player looks up before he strikes was furnished by Beals Wright in his matches with the English expert, H. A. Nisbet, when he was in this country. Nisbet when at the net trying to anticipate an opponent's pass would jump quickly to the right or left just before his opponent made his stroke, and instantly jump back again in the opposite direction.

Wright declared that he had lost so many aces by this manoeuvre that he came to expect it every time the relative positions recurred, yet with the idea clearly in his mind he found that he invariably looked up before striking, saw Nisbet jump and involuntarily turned his stroke in the opposite direction and lost.

Ware's Variation of the Same Device

Leo Ware with an opponent at the net would look straight at him as though to drive the ball through him by sheer speed, and then turn his wrist in making the stroke and lob the ball over his head, with the frequent result of earning an ace on the lob, as his opponent would misread his

eyes and keep his weight forward to meet a drive until too late to allow him to get back for the lob.

McLoughlin Read the Eyes of Brookes

McLoughlin in his recent book, cites a clear case of reading the opponent's eyes, telling (on p. 124) how he first learned the direction of Brookes's service by watching his eyes. Before he discovered this source of information, he couldn't tell where the ball was coming.

But I should be sorry after all this to have it thought for a moment that I advocate taking the eyes off the ball by a man who is learning to play lawn tennis. On the contrary, I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of everlastingly keeping your eyes on the ball. It is the most essential point in learning to hit the ball.

Watch the Ball Till Expert

Watch it as closely as you can until you not only have learned to hit it, but to hit it ninety-nine times out of a hundred in the centre of the racket. Even past that, it is necessary to watch the ball until you have learned to hit it with the centre of the racket in all the varying positions and with each of the many styles of strokes that you are expected to play.

Easy to Miss Centre of Racket

The playing centre of the tennis racket is very much smaller than it seems. The catgut strings are highly resilient in the very centre and for a few square inches around this central striking-point. This resiliency decreases rapidly as the strings approach the edge until they reach the wood, which is the point of absolute non-resiliency. Eighty per cent. of the ruined strokes of the beginner come from missing the centre of the racket.

Second Stage of Learning the Game

One should not make an effort to look away from the ball in striking; he should always try to look at it. But soon after the principles of making the stroke are mastered and the novice has learned to hit the ball well, he will unconsciously graduate to the second stage of learning tennis, which is in placing or controlling the direction of the ball. Then when he begins to place more accurately he will find that he loses the sense of his own location, and the accurate direction of the opponent's court and height of the net, unless he looks up constantly to keep these details clearly in mind.

Difficult to Keep Direction

The player runs about the court so much, twists and turns and shifts his own position so often, that it is constantly necessary to look in the direction he is playing to correct his steering compass, so to speak, and to get his bearings adjusted frequently. Soon the desire will follow to place closer to the lines and to hit the ball faster and closer to the net in consequence, and then this need to look up as the stroke is being made will force itself upon you unconsciously—and it need not be resisted as in golf unless it tends to make you miss hitting the ball properly.

If "Off Your Stroke," Go Back to First Principles

But before all things else, learn to walk before you try to run. Do not begin with the eyes off or take them off the ball before the complete mastery of the strokes themselves has been accomplished, and whenever you go "off your stroke" you will generally find that going back to first principles and keeping the eyes on the ball longer will bring back the lost skill. In the nec-

essary ten years that it requires to make a first-class player, at least the first two should be devoted to hard practice with the eyes on the ball. Even among the most apt pupils there is great danger of wrecking a promising career by hurrying one's progress in this particular even more than in any other.

Time to Lift Eyes Varies

There is much diversity of opinion as to the point at which an expert takes his eyes off the ball. I am convinced that this varies greatly with the individual and that no accurate rule can be laid down. Among the best American experts, the average is well after the ball leaves the ground, but some of them look up immediately after it bounds. Very few actually see the ball strike the racket except in smashing, but here it is possible to watch the ball longer than in serving because the direction does not have to be controlled in such narrow limits, or so accurately. Personally, I do not remember ever seeing the ball actually touch my racket.

In Smashing, Ball Can Be Watched Longer

Dewhurst, whose opinions are worthy of serious consideration, says in his "Science of Lawn Tennis": "The fault of taking the eye off the ball before it is hit constitutes the main source of error with most players."

Dewhurst's Opinion Sound but Misleading

Nor do I question the accuracy of this statement. The *necessity* for taking the eyes off the ball is a constant source of error, but I believe it to be a necessity. I have never yet seen a really severe player who did not do so. To keep the eyes on the ball until the stroke is completed means to weaken the attack, and it would seem

better to maintain severity of attack even though in doing so errors creep in from the lifting of the eyes.

Rushing Opponent Must Not Disconcert

Dewhurst emphasizes the danger of trying to watch the rushing opponent who follows his service up to the net with so much fuss as to distract the attention of the striker-out, and make him lift the eyes too soon and spoil his attempt at passing. That is an undeniable source of danger, but it seems to me due more to allowing one's self to be flustered by the rush of the threatening volleyer than to the danger of lifting the eyes too soon. The same result will follow if the nerves become unsteady under the rushing net attack, even though you keep your eyes on the ball throughout the stroke.

Dohertys Dwell on This Point

In their book on the game, the Doherty brothers also dwell on this point with the added warning that in handling the American twist service it is doubly necessary: "One may have a dim idea where one's opponent is, but the eye must be glued upon the ball."

Vaile's Impossible Advice

Vaile carries his instructions for keeping the eyes on the ball to such an extreme that he advises the player to watch that *part of the ball* that he intends to hit. This seems like splitting hairs, and I have made many tests since this theory was brought out to see if it were possible to watch *part* of a flying lawn tennis ball, but always without success.

In golf, it is often advised that the player should look at the back of the ball as he strikes it to prevent "topping," which often results from

looking at the top surface of the ball. But here we have a stationary object and a very small striking surface, which both differ from the problem we have to solve in tennis. There the ball flies so fast through the air that it is manifestly impossible to select a single part of it for attention, so I seriously doubt if Vaile's advice on this point is practicable.

Cannot Watch Part of a Flying Ball

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Do you consciously raise your eyes before the ball is hit?

Some of the Best Players Raise Their Eyes

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.
T. C. BUNDY: No, if so I miss the shot.
K. H. BEHR: Yes.
F. B. ALEXANDER: No.
R. D. LITTLE: No.
H. H. HACKETT: Yes.
B. C. WRIGHT: Yes.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: Yes, a fraction of a second.
R. L. MURRAY: Yes.
G. M. CHURCH: If my opponent is at the net, yes; if he is in the backcourt, no.
W. M. WASHBURN: No.
ELIA FOTTRELL: No.
CLARENCE HOBART: No.
E. B. DEWHURST: Not consciously.
J. R. STRACHAN: No.
C. R. GARDNER: Unconsciously.
A. S. DABNEY: Sometimes; ought not to.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: No.
F. C. INMAN: No.
W. F. JOHNSON: No.
N. W. NILES: No.
T. R. PELL: No.

LeRoy Looks Up First

ROBERT LEROY: No, I look first and lower them so as to look at the ball when I hit it.
A. M. SQUAIR: No.
G. F. TOUCHARD: No.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.
W. M. HALL: No.
RICHARD HARTE: No.
DEAN MATHEY: No.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.
G. C. SHAFER: Yes.
S. H. VOSHELL: I don't think so.
E. H. WHITNEY: I raise them but not consciously.
I. C. WRIGHT: No.
W. C. GRANT: Yes, in serving.

Unconsciously Raises Eyes, Says Whitney

Do you read your opponent's eyes for the direction of his stroke?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.
T. C. BUNDY: No.
K. H. BEHR: No.
F. B. ALEXANDER: Never.
R. D. LITTLE: No.
H. H. HACKETT: No.
B. C. WRIGHT: No.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: No.
R. L. MURRAY: Yes.
G. M. CHURCH: Against some players.
W. M. WASHBURN: No.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Sometimes.
CLARENCE HOBART: No.
E. B. DEWHURST: No.
J. R. STRACHAN: No.
C. R. GARDNER: Sometimes when he looks.
A. S. DABNEY: No.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Not consciously.
F. C. INMAN: No.
W. F. JOHNSON: No.
N. W. NILES: No.
T. R. PELL: No.
ROBERT LEROY: Yes, always.

Williams Reads the Other Man's Eyes

Few Others Say They Do

A. M. SQUAIR: Not only the eyes, in judging direction of opponent's return, his general position in the court and mine give the first hint. I try to decide first where the danger spots are, where the "hole" is in my court, what I would do if I were in his place. Then his body position

Squair Tells His Method of Anticipation

(facing or sidewise to net, etc.) length and direction of beginning of stroke, his eyes. His grip of the racket, strength and direction of the wind, the spin you gave the ball, all these help in deciding in what direction his return will come. I watch the ball more than anything else, although I try to see all he does. Finally, it is the ball itself which shows for certain the direction.

G. F. TOUCHARD: No.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.
W. M. HALL: No.
RICHARD HARTE: No.
DEAN MATHEY: No.
R. C. SEAVER: Certainly.
G. C. SHAFER: Yes.
S. H. VOSHELL: No.
E. H. WHITNEY: No, only in the serve.
I. C. WRIGHT: No.
W. C. GRANT: Not always.

If not the eyes, what do you rely on to first show the opponent's direction—arm, racket or ball?

What First Shows Direction?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Eyes, arm, racket, body, gesture before and at the moment of hitting ball.

T. C. BUNDY: His position and mine; also stance.

K. H. BEHR: None, generally from his position in the court.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Racket and general position.

R. D. LITTLE: Everything; racket motion, study of habits, favorite shots, etc.

Hackett Says Intuition Guides Him

H. H. HACKETT: Intuition.

B. C. WRIGHT: Position in court and arm.

J. C. PARKE: Position of opponent and self in the court and opponent's feet.

C. P. DIXON: Stance, arm and racket.

R. L. MURRAY: Also arm and racket.

G. M. CHURCH: Usually on the racket.

W. M. WASHBURN: His general attitude.

ELIA FOTTRELL: It depends on the opponent.

CLARENCE HOBART: His position and where he may be expected to play from.

E. B. DEWHURST: Position of ball; position of self; attitude of body and feet of opponent.

J. R. STRACHAN: Arm.

C. R. GARDNER: Depends on the man. It may be one or all or none of these.

Dabney Makes a "Psychological Guess"

A. S. DABNEY: On his general position in the court, habits of direction, psychological guess work, etc. A combination of mental process acquired by long practice which becomes intuitive.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Nothing in particular.

F. C. INMAN: Racket.

W. F. JOHNSON: Arm.

N. W. NILES: His habit, i. e., what he usually does. His stance, his racket.

T. R. PELL: Watch ball only.

ROBERT LEROY: I look also at his racket and arm.

A. M. SQUAIR: Arm, racket and ball are seen practically at the same time. The arm and racket give the warning but the ball is decisive.

Touchard Says There Is an Obvious Place for Every Shot

G. F. TOUCHARD: There is an obvious place for every shot. It depends on whether your opponent may be counted on to do the expected thing.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: You watch the ball and instinctively know the direction of the return.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Also his racket.

W. M. HALL: Racket and position of his body.

RICHARD HARTE: His arm, then racket, then ball.

DEAN MATHEY: The ball almost entirely, although sometimes the racket may have some influence.

R. C. SEAVER: I think you judge your opponent's return strokes by his position in court.

G. C. SHAFER: All help indicate direction.

S. H. VOSHELL: Arm, racket and ball. Position of opponent in court.

E. H. WHITNEY: Principally the position of the ball, and the position the player himself is in.

I. C. WRIGHT: Intuition.

V.

FOOTWORK

FOUR CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Keep up on the toes whenever the ball is in play.*

2—*Keep the knees bent just before and while making the stroke.*

3—*The line of the feet should be almost invariably parallel with the flight of the ball.*

4—*When waiting uncertainly for the next stroke, the position of the feet should be at an angle diagonal to the net.*

Up on Your Toes All the Time

THE use of the feet in lawn tennis is of far greater importance than one generally realizes. The balance of the body, the facility for moving quickly in any direction, the all-important follow through, and even the actual striking of the ball, depend largely for success on good footwork.

First and most important, one should be up on his toes, actually as well as figuratively, while making nearly every stroke. All life and snap disappear from the play when you settle down on your heels and instantly you are placed on the defensive. To attack sharply, to put "sting" in the ball, requires the elasticity of motion that can be had only when up on your toes.

START OF THE STROKE

END OF THE STROKE

Parke's Forehand Ground-Stroke.

It is apparent at once that Parke uses much more body-swing than does Dixon, and these pictures show his splendid follow through. The racket is above the wrist at all times, and the end of the stroke brings it across under the left arm much as does Dixon's style. The stroke is typically British.

END OF THE BACKHAND

END OF THE FOREHAND

Dixon's Typically English Style of Play.

It would be difficult to get two more perfectly matched photographs to illustrate the characteristic British strokes. Note the racket beveled back and the low finish of the backhand stroke, and the end of the forehand with the racket under the left arm. Dixon is an exceptionally heavy player and his strokes show less body swing than most other men of his class. Note also the British unchanged grip and low elbow.

Bending the Knees Adds Fire to Action

Bent knees are also essential during most of the play, and although strictly speaking the knees are not the feet, their use should come under the head of footwork. It may be more restful, perhaps, to stiffen the knees and settle down on flat feet, and this is sometimes safe when the ball is not actually in play or just about to be put into action. But while the play is on, or just before receiving the service, one should set all his springs for instant action and the greatest of these are the knees and feet.

The Waiting Position of Expectancy

Now, the position of expectancy is the one we must assume most often—the waiting position when the service is about to be handled, when at the net waiting for a volley, and even when back of the base-line anticipating the drive of your opponent. For this it is most apparent that not only should the knees be bent and the weight carried on the toes, but also that the angle of the feet should be such as to allow the quickest start in any possible direction that may be demanded.

Many Good Players Do Not Stand Right

I lay great stress on this point because I have found that a great many good players do not make use of it. Even the present American champion, Williams, shows distinct defects in his footwork, and seems to win despite it, rather than because of the position of his feet. Ex-champion Whitman also played too frequently with straight knees, flat feet and with his body squared around toward the net.

On the other hand, we find that McLoughlin, Larned, H. L. Doherty, Wrenn, and other great masters of the game almost invariably and

involuntarily fell into the orthodox positions that gave them the greatest power and latitude in action.

Feet Should Not Parallel the Net

Before a player can actually get set to make his next stroke he may be called upon to move quickly forward or back, to the right or to the left. With the feet parallel to the net, he is free for instant side motion, and if they are spread far enough apart, he will be very quick in jumping to either side. But if he is suddenly called on to move forward or backward from this position, he must lift one foot and put it down again either behind or in front of the other to push off and start his weight backward or forward.

Moving Backward Facilitated

Remember, it is easy to move the feet, but in shifting position the real problem is to move the whole body quickly. Carrying the weight low, with the feet spread well apart and the diagonal "stance" allows the quickest action possible in any direction, while the other permits quick action only sidewise and entails a slight delay in moving backward or forward.

How the Position Works Out

Let us look at the practical working-out of this theory. You are at the net trying to anticipate your opponent's passing stroke. In the parallel position, you feel ready to jump quickly in either direction. Good. But suppose he lobs over your head. This position of the feet will find you anchored at the net, and the best you can do will be to turn and run for the ball to save the situation with another defensive job.

If your feet had been in the diagonal position, the instant the overhead attack was discovered

Getting Back from the Net for a Lob

the forward foot would have pushed the whole weight backward and you would have been able to back up fast enough to have smashed the lob, or at least to have volleyed the ball and saved the attacking position. Even that tiny fraction of a second that is lost in lifting one foot and putting it forward to push off the weight backward, would have been enough to have saved the situation. It is just such points as this that make the clever player better than his less thorough rival.

Just as Bad at the Base-Line

Suppose on the other hand, you are at the base-line with feet parallel to the net, expecting a deep volley from an opponent at the net, confident that you could move quickly in either direction to anticipate the return. What happens if the other man plays a short ball, drops a stop-volley just over the net? Again that fraction of a second needed to start forward is lost and you cannot get in fast enough to reach the low-bounding ball that might otherwise have offered an easy chance for a kill if you had got there.

Diagonal Position Seems to Favor Forehand

The position recommended at first seems to favor the forehand stroke and it is true that it takes a shorter step to swing for the forehand stroke than if the ball comes on the other side. But on the other hand, for the backhand stroke, you simply step forward with the right foot, turning the body with the step, if the ball is coming short; or backward with the left foot, if the ball is coming deeper. Either way, you swing quickly into position for backhand play, and although the turn of the body is slightly greater than if

the feet had been parallel with the net, the motion can be made quicker. On the other hand, the turn for the forehand stroke is less.

Feet Must Be in Line with Flight During Stroke

In actually making the stroke, whether it be forehand or backhand, the feet should be almost if not quite in line with the flight of the ball. This rule is most essential and the failure to observe it is one of the most common faults of beginners. In making the stroke, as we shall presently see, the weight of the body must be swung forward from one foot to the other, very much as in good golf, and in order to preserve the balance it is necessary that the forward foot shall be in the line of the flight to catch the weight and quickly recover the balance for the next movement.

Foot-Faults as Troublesome as Ever

The use of the feet in serving is one point that has caused more trouble in the lawn tennis world than anything else. Foot-faults have been a constant source of fresh legislation on both sides of the ocean, and even to this day the difficulty of judging a fair service is no less difficult than it was twenty years ago.

Simply a Matter of Which Happens First

No rules that can be devised will do away with the difficulty of deciding which of two things happens first. If the foot crosses the line before the ball leaves the racket, it is a fault; and if the ball leaves the racket first, it is not. No matter what words are used to describe this infraction of the laws there will always remain that same difficulty in deciding which happens first.

For the player who wants to avoid the danger of being foot-faulted, and who prefers to

eliminate even the suspicion that keeps the baseline umpire watching him so closely that it is inclined to upset his game, the safest way is to keep both feet well behind the line.

Carelessness Causes Many Foot-Faults

Many players make foot-faults through sheer carelessness and they are generally the result of not taking care in planting the left foot before serving. It is safer to give the line six inches of margin and not tread even close to the limit allowed—the few inches gained otherwise are not worth the risk of being foot-faulted.

But many players plant the left foot carefully enough and then after they look up to toss the ball in the air, they promptly lift the foot again and replant it nervously a few inches closer toward the net. Whitman used to do this constantly, and Theodore Pell has also been a bad transgressor in this respect.

One Common Fault of Beginners

Beginners frequently develop a habit of advancing the left foot in playing the backhand stroke, and this awkward position cuts off the back swing of the racket. There is no freedom of swing and little chance to follow through with the arm across the body in this position, and it is absolutely necessary to put the right foot forward and turn the body toward the ball to succeed at all in making the stroke.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Do you use bent knees and carry weight on the toes when making stroke?

The Question of Bending the Knees

R. N. WILLAMS, 2ND: I think so.

T. C. BUNDY: Usually.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: No.

R. D. LITTLE: Knees probably somewhat bent as weight is carried well forward.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: For some strokes bent knees, as volleying and half-volleying; on toes when serving and receiving.

Parke Says All Foot-Work Must Be Done on the Toes

J. C. PARKE: Knees straight but not stiff. All foot-work must be done on toes.

C. P. DIXON: Yes.

R. L. MURRAY: Yes, decidedly.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.

CLARENCE HOBART: Not consciously.

E. B. DEWHURST: Not particularly.

J. R. STRACHAN: I think so.

C. R. GARDNER: Yes.

A. S. DABNEY: Not always. When volleying low balls, yes. Not always on ground strokes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I think so.

F. C. INMAN: I do in preparing for stroke—but straighten and take firm stand when hitting.

W. F. JOHNSON: Bent knees and carry weight on ball of foot.

N. W. NILES: Yes.

T. R. PELL: No.

ROBERT LEROY: My knees are somewhat bent. My weight shifts as I hit, forehand, from right foot to left, backhand, vice versa. This is a very marked characteristic of my forehand stroke, and gives it great force without much muscle behind it.

How Can a Player Balance on Heels?

A. M. SQUAIR: Knees slightly bent. Balanced on both heel and toes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Yes.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No. According to position of player and ball.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: Yes.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: I think I do, to a certain extent at least.

R. C. SEAVER: I do not bend knees, but run forward to meet ball.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.

I. C. WRIGHT: No, but you should.

Do you stand, while waiting for the next stroke, with feet parallel with the net or diagonal?

Feet Parallel with Net or Diagonal?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Parallel.

T. C. BUNDY: Quartering.

K. H. BEHR: Depends entirely on stroke awaited and position in court, at net one-half diagonally.

F. B. ALEXANDER: On account of weak left ankle, my weight is more on my right foot; parallel.

R. D. LITTLE: Hardly diagonal, but certainly not parallel.

H. H. HACKETT: Parallel.

B. C. WRIGHT: Being left-handed, the right foot a few inches in advance.

J. C. PARKE: I never stand during a rally. Before rally commences, my feet are parallel to net.

Majority Favor Parallel Stance

C. P. DIXON: Diagonal.

R. L. MURRAY: Parallel.

G. M. CHURCH: Nearly parallel.

W. M. WASHBURN: Parallel.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Almost diagonal.

CLARENCE HOBART: Parallel.

E. B. DEWHURST: Parallel.

J. R. STRACHAN: Between the two.

C. R. GARDNER: Depends on what expecting. Diagonal ordinarily.

A. S. DABNEY: Parallel.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Parallel.

F. C. INMAN: Diagonally.

W. F. JOHNSON: Diagonal.

N. W. NILES: Parallel.

T. R. PELL: Parallel.

LeRoy Strong on Foot-Work

ROBERT LEROY: Always diagonal. Before making the stroke, I try to make sure that, for forehand, my right foot is well back (from the net) of the left one; for backhand, vice versa; when hitting, I stand sidewise to the net.

A. M. SQUAIR: Can't say definitely. Depends on stroke and position in the court. More likely to be diagonal than parallel, I think.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Diagonal.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: You don't know what position you will be forced to assume.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Feet parallel.

W. M. HALL: Usually parallel.

RICHARD HARTE: Parallel.

DEAN MATHEY: Parallel until I see whether I am to take a forehand or backhand stroke.

R. C. SEAVER: Parallel.

G. C. SHAFER: Diagonal, usually.

S. H. VOSHELL: Parallel.

E. H. WHITNEY: Diagonal.

I. C. WRIGHT: I have poor form.

W. C. GRANT: Diagonal.

VI.

THE SWING AND HITTING THE BALL

SIX CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*The back swing should begin well before you know just where the ball will bound.*

2—*The body weight must be shifted from the back to the forward foot as the racket comes forward, and its momentum added to the swing of the arm.*

3—*The follow through should be as complete as possible, with weight, arm and body following after the ball.*

4—*The shoulders must be turned in making the stroke, and turning the hips will add power.*

5—*Every motion of arm, racket, and body should be in direct line with the ball's flight; all side motions detract from the stroke.*

6—*Keep away from the ball, before hitting, both sidewise and backward, so that you can lean toward it to strike, and always be moving forward when you hit it. Keep the elbow well free from the side.*

Entirely Aside from Making the Stroke

AFTER the use of the feet comes the use of the body and the arm, entirely aside from the actual making of the stroke. Whether you make a forehand or backhand, a

lift or a cut stroke, the general principles involved are much the same, and a thorough study of these will help the beginner a great deal.

Three Distinct Actions Run Into One

Three distinct actions must be kept in mind, although they frequently all run into one with such rapidity that it is hard to separate them. First we have the back swing in preparation for the stroke; then the act of hitting the ball, and finally the follow through.

A full and free back swing is most essential. It is not necessary, as in golf, to wrap your arm and racket around behind your neck in order to get the full impetus necessary for a hard drive, but a stroke that starts only a foot or two back of the point of impact with the ball is unlikely to have any great power.

Starting the Back-Swing Early

In coming into position for a stroke that is made on the run, as a great many of them are during fast play, the racket must be swung back long before the ball is ready to bound. Uncertainty of the actual point at which it will be met does more to prevent a full swing than anything else with beginners, but one should remember that it is easier to correct a badly aimed shot after the racket is well behind you, than to make a good stroke without the necessary back swing.

Novices Find This Difficult

In coaching young players, I have always found it most difficult to get them to swing back early enough; they seem afraid to start the stroke until they are sure where the ball will come. Yet there is no reason why this bad tendency cannot be overcome in short order.

At the back of its preliminary swing the

racket must pause anyway and lose its momentum before starting forward, so that it can be checked for a slightly longer period if necessary, if you should unintentionally swing too early for the stroke. It is far better to err on this side than on the other, so it is a safe rule to keep swinging back earlier until you find you must noticeably check the racket before starting the forward swing for the stroke.

Far Better Too Early Than Too Late

This pause at the end of the back swing has an inclination to steady the stroke, but it can easily be exaggerated and it then has a tendency, particularly when marked, to expose to the opponent the direction of the attack. George Wrenn exaggerated this pause until it became a distinct drawback to his play, while Larned delayed his forward swing just long enough to steady the stroke without exposing direction.

Pause Helps to Steady the Stroke

The total absence of any pause may result in hurrying the stroke too much and the tendency to "snap" on the ball which follows this habit invariably results in a loss of control. If full time is not allowed and the forward swing is hurried, the slightest deviation of the ball from the expected flight will result in a bad stroke, as there is left no time to correct the swing to meet this shift.

At the end of the reach backward, it will be noticed that the arm swings naturally either upward or sidewise behind you. By all means, select the upward motion. This keeps the racket in the direct line of flight and avoids the side motion that is so apt to throw off the accuracy of the

Avoid Side Motion in Back-Swing

stroke as well as the body's poise during the forward stroke.

Increasing the Arc of the Arm's Swing

It is also well to increase somewhat the arc of this circle in the back swing by turning slightly with the shoulders so that you have the longest reach possible without getting out of position for a free stroke. The shoulders at the end of the back swing should be parallel with the feet and the line of flight of the ball. The weight of the body, too, should be shifted full on the back foot and in making a severe stroke, it should be swung back as far as it is possible to preserve the balance.

Making the Actual Stroke

When the time is right to begin the forward swing, that is to make the stroke, the body turns on the hips, the right shoulder comes forward, followed by the upper arm, and then the fore-arm; and finally just before the ball is hit, the wrist adds the snap of a whip-lash to the blow and the full weight of the body shifts quickly forward from the backward to the forward foot, so that at the moment of impact every possible energy is concentrated in the blow.

The All-Important Follow-Through

Now comes the greatest difficulty that is found in the play of most players. They are inclined to stop here. The ball hit, they feel that is as far as they can control it, and they make no effort to follow through, recovering the balance as quickly as possible in the most convenient way.

But this is all wrong. Just as in golf, the follow through is most important, and while it is true that after the ball has once left the racket, it is impossible to further affect its movements,

the after swing of the player does affect the whole stroke most materially. It is impossible to make a true stroke without it, since any effort to cut short the swing infallibly affects the stroke itself and draws the racket away from its work before its maximum power has been exerted.

Body Should Swing After the Ball

The racket should not only follow the ball itself just as far as you can normally reach, but you should also bend the whole body as far as the balance will allow to lengthen the swing of the arm. The entire body should be turned on the hips, the bent knees allowing it to move forward with the stroke and extend the swing of the racket. At the end of this following swing, the body should turn still further around, the shoulders pulling in the arm and the wrist bending to allow the racket's impetus to be checked with a short swing like the *moulinet* of the swordsman.

Forward Step Will Recover Balance

For the most exaggerated ground strokes, the weight of the body is thrown so violently forward in the follow through that the balance is frequently checked by carrying the back foot forward to a further advanced position. Indeed this style is not at all uncommon, and where well practiced it almost invariably increases the body swing, the follow through and the power of the stroke. It is an excellent habit to allow the weight to draw the back foot forward to a new position, and the habit of taking this forward step in making the stroke will add greatly to the vigor of the attack.

Dangerous in the Front of the Court

This method should be used sparingly when the player is well forward in his court, for if the

weight is thrown too far forward when in the volleying position, it is easy to lose the balance forward and become exposed to an overhead attack by a lob before the balance can be recovered.

Every Motion in Line with Ball's Flight

Now, through all these three motions of the stroke, one cardinal rule should always be kept in mind. Every motion should be as far as possible in the direct line of the ball's flight; every motion that is off this line tends to lessen or check the power of the stroke and to lessen its accuracy. Side motion of any kind only weakens the swing.

Body Must Not Bend Backward

It is not an uncommon fault among beginners to see the player bend his body backward away from the ball, particularly in making the forehand ground-stroke. This only serves to detract from the body swing by checking the forward motion of the weight. Swinging the racket across the face of the ball to exaggerate the cut checks the forward force of the stroke, and sometimes loses more in speed than it gains in the twist.

Timing the Biggest Factor for Speed

Timing the stroke, of course, is the biggest factor in getting power and speed in the ball. All of the momentum in the racket and arm should be at its maximum at the exact second of impact, and the added power of the body's weight should be exerted just before the ball is hit to increase the force of the stroke.

Just as it weakens a stroke to bend backward, it adds to its power to bend forward to meet the ball as the blow is delivered. The position before making the stroke, therefore, should never be close to the ball. Great care should be

taken to keep away from it, not only sidewise, that is, back from the line of flight, but also well behind the spot at which you plan to make the stroke, so as to jump at the ball in making the stroke, and to lean against it hard as the supreme effort is made.

Keeping Away from the Ball

Getting too close to the ball either way invariably spoils the stroke by forcing the weight backward to allow room for the swing, which kills the stroke at once; or by not allowing room for the forward body swing in making the stroke, which greatly weakens it.

The feet should be spread well apart always for a powerful swing, but it is possible to get them too far apart. The effect of too wide a stance is to limit the follow through, for this position prevents the weight from following well after the ball.

Elbow Should Be Level With the Ball

So far as possible, the elbow should be kept on a level with the ball as it is struck. For a very low ball, it is generally necessary to drop the head of the racket slightly downward, and for a high bound the opposite may often be the case, but it is well to use the striking arm as a jointed rod in the same plane that the head of the racket travels.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Do you customarily take a full swing, starting from as far back as possible and following through to the very end?

Should the Stroke Be Made with a Full Swing?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.

T. C. BUNDY: Try to.

K. H. BEHR: I think so.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Not necessarily.

R. D. LITTLE: Whenever the stroke is not too hurried.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: No.

J. C. PARKE: Not too far back, but following through to end.

C. P. DIXON: Half swing to three-quarters.

R. L. MURRAY: Not always, but I try to.

G. M. CHURCH: No.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Always try to.

Hobart Thinks Short Swing Best

CLARENCE HOBART: Best results by shortening back swing.

E. B. DEWHURST: I try to, except in volleying.

J. R. STRACHAN: I don't start from as far back as possible, but I do follow through.

C. R. GARDNER: No.

A. S. DABNEY: Not absolutely full. Follow through should be the most pronounced.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I think so.

F. C. INMAN: Yes.

W. F. JOHNSON: No, only a half swing.

N. W. NILES: Follow through to the end but do not start correspondingly far back, quite. This applies gen-

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WILLIAM A. LARNED

Perfect End of a Straight Forehand Drive.

The action shown in this snap-shot, revealing a perfect follow-through, could hardly be surpassed. Compare the freedom and long sweep of the extended arm with the pictures of Brookes, McLoughlin and other masters, to see why Larned was justly known as the best ground-stroke player in the world.

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WILLIAM M. JOHNSTON

Body-Swing Increasing the Follow-Through.

Here is a splendid example of perfect follow-through. Johnston is a very small man, yet drives one of the fastest balls seen in modern tournament play. The secret of his success is well illustrated in this picture. Note the bent knees, and shoulders turned and carried forward to add to the length of the swing.

erally speaking to all but my volleys, which are or ought to be a quicker and sharper stroke.

T. R. PELL: Not always.

Checking the Swing to Make the Ball Drop

ROBERT LEROY: No. My swing does not (for the forehand) go very far back, but it is quite high in the air and the follow through is pretty complete, except when I stop it consciously, in order to make the ball drop very quickly, as when passing a volleyer cross-court very gently.

A. M. SQUAIR: A full swing usually.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I think I do.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Sharp short swing.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Try to.

RICHARD HARTE: No, start back and finish well up, but the stroke is not exaggerated.

Most Players Favor Full Swing

DEAN MATHEY: I try to as I believe this style to be correct.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: Yes.

VII.

THE FOREHAND STROKE

FOUR CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Learn the drop-stroke and use it always against a volleyer at the net.*

2—*For driving against a player in the back of his court, use a straight drive or an undercut ball.*

3—*Change your pace if necessary to throw the other man off his game.*

4—*Play high over the net unless time is important, or the adversary is in position to volley; then play low for a pass, or lob.*

Importance of the Forehand Ground-Stroke

LONG after the true swing has been mastered, the actual stroke itself should be studied. There is some choice in this matter, and while a player may become a regular user of a certain style of stroke, his play will be the stronger if he succeeds in mastering two or three different methods of hitting the ball so that he may alter the shot to meet the conditions that confront him.

Fully half the game is made up of ground strokes even among confirmed volleyers, and with base-line players ninety per cent. of their play is confined to these strokes. And of this share, from sixty to eighty per cent. of the ground

strokes are made on the forehand side, since that is the most natural and the strongest way to hit the ball.

Three Ways to Hit the Ball

For the forehand ground stroke then, which is what we have now under consideration, there are three methods of hitting the ball, with many variations of each. First, we have the normal straight drive, made with the racket following the ball in a direct line as long as possible before it starts its flight, so that the ball receives little or no twist in making the stroke.

Under-Cut and Top-Spin Strokes

Then we have the undercut ball that is sliced or "chopped" with a glancing downward stroke that makes it spin backward on its own axis, or in the direction opposite to its flight; and finally, we have the over-cut or forward spinning ball, that is made with what is commonly known as the drop stroke, the lift stroke, or by some as the "Lawford" stroke. Call it what you will, this is considered by most authorities as the most valuable of all the methods of playing the forehand stroke, and will therefore be considered first.

The Original Lawford Stroke

Without going too deeply into the history of this play, it is interesting to note how it came to be called the Lawford stroke. Among the very earliest of the English experts was one player, Henry F. Lawford, who stood out among his contemporaries because of the force of his forehand drive off the ground. Lawford was the first to put marked top-spin on the ball and the power and speed of his strokes made him nearly unconquerable when at his best.

The original Lawford stroke was made with

As the Famous Englishman Made It

an upward glancing blow, the racket finishing above the head and right shoulder, and the ball receiving a very sharp top-spin that made it fly fast, drop quickly and shoot from the ground. Lawford had many imitators but few ever succeeded in getting this difficult stroke under any close control. Its popularity died out for a time when the English expert retired from competition, only to be revived again in America many years later, or at least the name resurrected and tacked onto a similar lifting drive with top-spin.

How the American Drop-Stroke Differs

The American drop stroke differs from the original Lawford stroke chiefly in that the wrist is used a good deal more than with the original, and the body weight is carried more into the stroke so that the follow through is more complete. The racket sweeps more to the left at the end of the stroke, and more often finishes over the left shoulder when properly played. But there are nearly as many variations of this drop stroke in use in America to-day as there are players using it—hardly two are the same in detail.

End of the Swing Most Important

The stroke can be made with a full backswing and follow through, or each can be cut off nearly half its length, although there is always a loss in accuracy when the follow through is shortened. The racket sometimes finishes far out to the left and is drawn up slightly at the end of its swing, sometimes over the left shoulder, which is the safest ending for the stroke, and the arc of the swing is sometimes so shortened and exaggerated that the racket finishes in front of the face or over the head and right shoulder.

Extreme Drop-Strokes Not Reliable

These extreme drop strokes, as a rule, are not reliable. They require such constant practice and depend on such a perfect adjustment of the angle of the short impact for a true flight that they entail too large a percentage of error to be counted on. Besides, the exaggerated "lift" in the stroke gives the ball a very rapid spin that brings a sharp drop, the blow on the ground checks the ball, and its bound is weakened, offering an easy mark for the back-court player if he gives the ball plenty of room and returns it after a full bound.

Violence Exhausts the Player

In addition to this, the making of this exaggerated stroke itself pumps the player by the very violence of the arm's swing, and exhausts him without giving an adequate return for the effort it demands. I have seen many a young player who worshipped this so-called Lawford stroke, exhaust himself in a short match and finally fall easy prey to an experienced adversary who stayed back in his court and fed the balls back to him until he tired himself out trying to kill with these terrific drives.

Best Way of Playing This Stroke

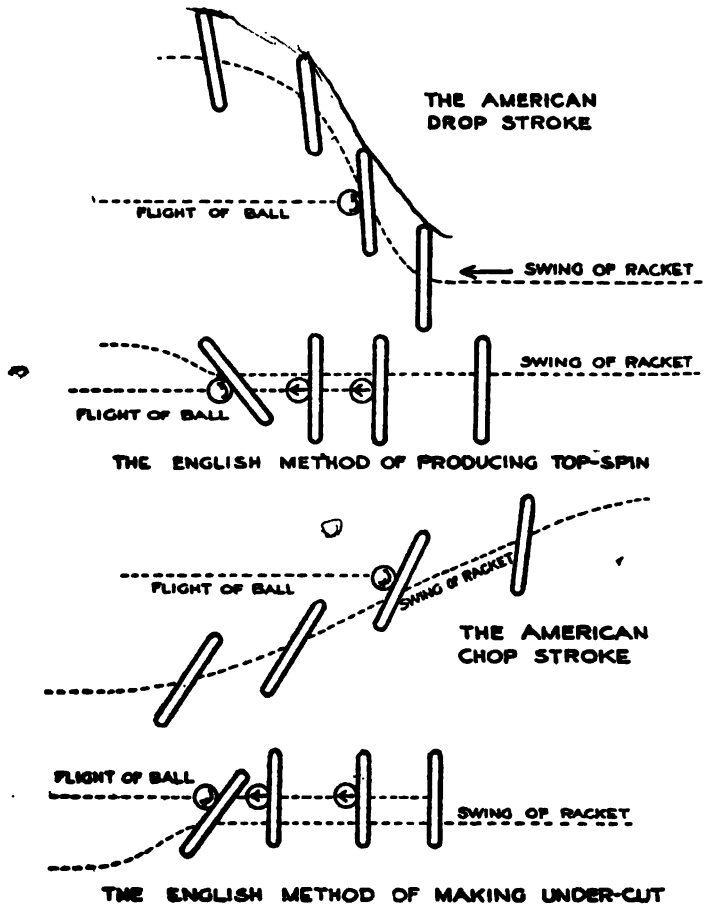
The most useful form of the top-spinning stroke requires a medium back swing, not a very long one, a sweeping impact rather than a sharp glancing blow, and a gradual upturn at the last end of the stroke to put the spin on the ball after it has received plenty of power for speed and enough follow through for guidance. The English players, some of them, have a way of using top-spin at the last end of their strokes that does not give so pronounced a drop as does the glanc-

ing blow, but has the virtue of being much better controlled.

English Method of Putting on Twist

This top-spin is put on entirely with a turn of the wrist just before the racket leaves the ball.

Diagrams Show Both Methods



The wrist turns the racket over it and the spin is given from pressure on top of the ball, rather than from behind it as with the style that is more

familiar in America. In either case, the rough strings grip the surface of the ball and compel it to revolve rapidly on its own axis. It is apparent that this twisting pressure can be exerted with more power when the racket is behind the ball than when above it and the result is shown in the faster rotation generally gained by the American drop stroke than the English type.

Rough Strings Grip Ball's Surface

The variations of the forehand drop stroke are almost unlimited and the best types show the most valuable stroke of the game. But this stroke is useful only in certain circumstances and the top-spin hurts rather than helps the play under other conditions. With an opponent at the net, there is no question that it is the best of all attacks.

A top-spinning ball is the most difficult of all returns to volley; firstly, because it drops so soon after crossing the net, and must be lifted back over again; and, secondly, because it glances upward from the volleyer's racket and slows up his volley in consequence. To offset this, it is necessary for him to meet the ball more sharply and slightly more over it to check the top-spin.

Top-Spin Most Useful Against a Volleyer

In addition to this, the drop stroke carries great speed in the early part of its flight. Its initial velocity is greater than any other stroke, as the drop can be relied on to shorten its flight and bring it into court, and until the top-spin begins to take effect, this ball travels very fast indeed. So the volleyer has speed, dropping trajectory and troublesome rotation all to contend with if he tries to volley a top-spinning ball. Moral: Learn

Net Player Always Troubled by It

this stroke and use it every time you try to pass a volleyer at the net.

Ineffective Against Opponent at Base-Line

However, the same reasoning that makes this stroke so valuable against a volleyer, destroys its usefulness against a base-line player. After the drop, the top-spinning ball loses its forward speed very rapidly, and when it strikes the ground at an unnaturally sharp angle, more of its life is crushed out. The spin makes it shoot from the bound but the impact of the ball after a deep bound is comparatively weak and if the opponent will stay back well behind his base-line, he will generally find little difficulty in handling the lifting drive.

Alexander's Style the Best Model

Perhaps the best model we have for this stroke is Alexander, and his use of top-spin has been very effective. He combines a very full swing and good follow through with plenty of lift so that his drives are very hard to volley. I do not think I ever met a player whose return of the service was more difficult to volley than Alexander when he got the ball on his forehand. It does not pass so often as others but its speed and twist make it very hard to return aggressively.

LeRoy's Short Swing Conceals Direction

On the other hand, the drop stroke players with a shorter back swing, like LeRoy and the late Kriegh Collins, conceal their direction much better. LeRoy comes up on the ball so quickly and with so little preliminary swing that he is able to whip it across the court and get it out of reach almost before you can realize its direction. Williams also uses the short back swing in his forehand

strokes, but he tops less than LeRoy and many others, and gets better length and speed in consequence.

Difficult to Play Both Twists

So, against a back-court player, one finds the top-spin a distinct handicap instead of an advantage, and he has the choice of the straight driving stroke or the under-cut ball. Regarding the chop stroke, it might be well to say that nearly every player who has mastered the full use of this stroke has depended on it entirely, and it is doubly difficult to control both the under-cut and the over-spinning strokes. The swings are so dissimilar that it is almost impossible to keep in close touch with both. It is easier to change either cut when needed for variety to a straight drive, which can be combined with the twist strokes much more successfully than they with each other.

Under-Cut Reverses the Points in Its Favor

The under-cut drive, or slice, or chop stroke, as it is most often known, has also its virtues as well as its drawbacks, just like its brother. Against the man at the net it is a positive handicap, for no ball is easier to volley than one that is under-cut and no ball is so difficult to pass with as one of these chop strokes. The back-spin keeps the ball up longer in the air, slows up its flight, making it higher and easier to reach than any other stroke, while the rotation tends to make it come away from the volleyer's racket with increased speed and crispness.

Hard to Handle from the Bound

Against the base-line player, on the other hand, it is correspondingly hard to handle. The spin makes the ball catch on the ground and rise to the bound at a low, unnatural angle. After

the bound, the ball hangs lifeless in the air, lacking the needed impact from which to get away a good drive. What still remains of its back-spin also tends to draw it downward from the player's racket, and one is never sure how much must be allowed for this, so that the return must be lifted a little higher over the net for safety or another under-cut return made from it to reverse the rotation of the ball.

English Use of the Wrist

The chop stroke is started higher in the back swing than any other and the ball met with a downward glancing blow that makes the end of the swing finish with the racket in front of the left knee. As in the drop stroke, the English vary this stroke somewhat in a similar manner, giving the same full follow through and imparting the spin to the ball by turning the wrist and drawing the racket under the ball just before it leaves the strings.

W. Johnson Developed Long Swing for Under-Cut

Wallace Johnson has cultivated an exceptionally long swing for the under-cut stroke and he is perhaps the best exponent of this type we have, but the shot is sometimes cut off to such an extreme that its name of "chop stroke" well describes the motion which resembles the swing of a hatchet in chopping wood. Bundy also makes good use of the undercut, and he crouches even more than Johnson in making the stroke. His ball lacks the speed of the Philadelphian's also.

Beals Wright's Skill with the Chop

Beals Wright, who became so famous for his clever play in many international matches, developed the chop stroke to its highest possibilities, and it was truly remarkable the accuracy and at-

tacking power he secured with it. More than any other, he succeeded in passing an opponent at the net by slowing up his chop strokes and making them drop from sheer lack of speed despite the back-spin. Little calls this the "fadeaway" shot. Wright's greatest success with the stroke, however, depended on an exceptional ability to use the lob for attack. He drove his adversaries back from the net by lobbing and then chopped at their feet.

Half-Arm Jabs and Push Strokes

Among young players, this chop-stroke is often cut off so short that it becomes little more than a stab or a jab of the racket, and then the stroke has lost all its value, for it lacks the speed to make it effective. Such shots with the half-arm push or "pat" are the weakest of all attempts at the game, and generally come from the mental attitude of trying to fight the ball away from you, rather than directing the returns with any intelligence. Snapping the racket back with a late, jerky back-swing and no pause before the stroke, is nearly as bad as the absence of swing, and brings even more errors.

Straight Stroke the Best for Driving

For pure driving purposes, probably the straight stroke without any marked twist is the most reliable. As played by Larned, this stroke became a powerful weapon of attack and its strong flight and deep bound kept his opponent well out of court at nearly all times, unless they risked the difficult run to the net. In making this stroke, a long back swing is even more valuable than for either of the others, and it is often wise to pause slightly at the end of the back

swing before striking. This pause has a tendency to steady the aim of the player and eliminate the danger of "snapping" on the ball with a jerky back swing that throws the direction off.

Little Change Needed to Get the Drop

The ball is met truly in the center of the racket and followed as long and as far forward as it is possible to reach. More than in any other stroke, the follow through counts here. The shoulders should be thrown forward after the ball rather than turned or drawn upward as in completing the drop stroke and the racket should finish far out in front and perhaps a little over to the left.

Straight and Drop-Strokes Work Well Together

This is the most valuable stroke to vary with the drop-stroke, and the motions are so nearly alike that it is only necessary to straighten up a little with the shoulders at the end of the stroke, draw the racket up and finish the swing a trifle further to the left, to give the ball a little top-spin. This spin can be increased as much as the circumstances demand by simply increasing the glancing angle of the blow or turning the wrist more in the English style to give the ball the forward rotation. When the other man comes to the net, and a passing stroke is needed, then the drop can easily be put on the ball without entirely changing the manner of striking, which would warn the adversary what to look for.

Chances of Getting to the Net

In getting to the net, from a position with both players back in their courts, the cut stroke is distinctly better than either of the others, but the straight-hit ball is better than the drop stroke. One distinct advantage of the under-cut ball for

this purpose is that it travels slower through the air allowing more time for the dangerous run from the base-line to the volleying position, which reverses the action of the drop stroke.

The direction of either stroke toward the centre of the court for the effort to get into the volleying position is as important as the stroke itself, but this phase of the play will be treated later under the head of position play.

Use of the Forcing Stroke

The use of the "forcing stroke," that is, the stroke that is intended to get the opponent into difficulties that will force him to give you a weak ball for killing purposes, rather than a stroke that is intended to win outright, is also a matter of tactics, rather than pure strokes, but the method of making it must be treated here.

Larned's Skill at This Play

Larned, perhaps, was the most expert player in making these strokes before McLoughlin appeared on the horizon, and there are many who still believe that he was better in this play than the Californian who succeeded him to the championship crown. Larned had a way with him that was well-nigh irresistible, when he wanted to get his opponent into difficulties. He drove his forehand stroke very high over the net and very deep into the court with a peculiar little jump to it that kept pushing his man back behind his court in a most aggressive way. His opponent seemed to be always playing up-hill.

A High, Deep Drive Often Best

For pure driving, the ball should be played high and deep, and for the forcing stroke, unless time is an important consideration to catch the opponent out of position, it should still be kept

high and the bound be made as deep as possible to get the opponent further into difficulties.

When to Use the Fast, Low Shot

It is only when the adversary threatens a net attack, or is actually in place at the net, that the risk of the low passing shot should be taken, for then the risk is worth the effort, and then too, shortness rather than length is what is required. The most important consideration is to keep the ball low and to make it drop still lower the instant it has crossed the net. Often it will be found better to slow down the stroke so that it will drop faster, particularly on the cross-court passes.

Speed and Drop Needed for Small Openings

With an opponent off his balance, or when playing for a narrow opening down the alley, speed is often necessary to keep the other man from reaching the ball, but even then a little top-spin or over-twist will help to bring the ball down into the court and also make it fly faster through the air.

Changing the Pace a Puzzling Defence

Changing the pace is perhaps the most puzzling of all variations of stroke play, and it can be done with either the ground stroke or the volley. One's opponent gets accustomed to receiving the balls from you with a certain amount of speed and impact, and he guages his own strokes accordingly. To alter this materially is generally certain to throw him off his usual stroke and to a certain extent upset his accuracy and control. A fast drive followed by a soft shot that has half the impact in it will make it more difficult for him to maintain a severe attack. This is a most valuable point in defence.

Correspondingly, the same play can be used

Varying the Length for Attack

for attack, but in this case it takes the form of variations in the length of your returns. A deep ball followed by a short ball will often prove a very dangerous attack. The antagonist is drawn in close to the net, and then passed before he can get back into position for the next shot, or he is driven back behind his base-line and then given a short ball that pitches in front of the service line. This keeps him running forward and back, in addition to the sidewise work, and the backward and forward running will be found quite as tiring and much more disconcerting than the side-to-side hustling.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Do you think the top-spin, under-cut or straight stroke without twist the best attack?

Top-Spin, Under-Cut or Straight Stroke?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Straight stroke.

T. C. BUNDY: Am essentially a "chop stroke" player but advise top-spin or straight stroke as capable of highest development.

K. H. BEHR: The last for back-court play; the first against a net attack. I employ both about equally, in doubles the former entirely.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Great believer in top-spin. One should be able to use a variation at times.

R. D. LITTLE: Top-spin, moderately applied.

H. H. HACKETT: Straight stroke in singles. Top-spin in doubles.

B. C. WRIGHT: For the present game, the top-spin is best as it is harder to volley. The straight stroke is best for a deep shot as the bound is lower, and has more speed.

Most Experts Favor Top-Spin

J. C. PARKE: For attack, the straight stroke, with just a suspicion of top-spin for control, seems to me to be the infinitely more serviceable; but in defence, it depends upon the nature of the attack, as top-spin is very useful against a volleyer, but equally useless against a base-liner.

C. P. DIXON: Top-spin or straight stroke; the former is undoubtedly the best attack on a hard or fast court.

R. L. MURRAY: Top-spin allows of more control as it brings the ball down into the court.

G. M. CHURCH: I consider the top-spin drive the best attack, because it increases steadiness and because with it the ball can be hit harder without going out than with any other stroke.

START OF THE STROKE

FINISH OF THE SWING

Anthony F. Wilding's Fine Backhand Stroke.

Despite the low elbow of the English style, Wilding played a fine, free backhand stroke, with splendid body action and a slight top made by turning the wrist at the end. Note the extreme swing and fine follow through, the racket finishing well out in front instead of across the body as with many English experts.

FINISH OF THE SWING

HITTING THE BALL

Theodore Pell's Fine Rolling Backhand Stroke.

These pictures illustrate well the fine backhand stroke made with a sharp top-spin. Pell's racket meets the ball horizontally, passes over it and finishes with a splendid follow-through far out in line with the ball's flight.

Washburn Prefers Straight Stroke on Grass

W. M. WASHBURN: On grass, the straight stroke is always useful. The topped drive is best against a net player, the cut against a back-court player. A topped or cut stroke is as good on dirt as on grass.

ELIA FOTTRELL: A little top-spin (enough to keep the ball in court). More top-spin when the opponent is at the net.

CLARENCE HOBART: Straight strokes with slight top for passing strokes.

E. B. DEWHURST: Straight stroke with a roll or top.

J. R. STRACHAN: With new balls I use a straight stroke and when they become a little worn I use the top-spin as a rule.

Depends on the Opponent, Gardner Thinks

C. R. GARDNER: Depends on the man you attack. The fastest and most effective strokes so far as pace goes are doubtless hit without twist. Sometimes one has to put top-spin on the ball to make it drop or stay in court.

A. S. DABNEY: Top-spin. Straight stroke good if ball is fairly high up. But straight stroke has a spin, i. e., it slides off the end of the racket and has a *side* spin. Example—Behr.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: It depends on the person's game.

F. C. INMAN: Top-spin. On account of better control.

W. F. JOHNSON: The under-cut if accurate.

For Grass, Williams's Style Preferred to McLoughlin's

N. W. NILES: Generally speaking "top-spin" should be more decided on dirt than grass. On grass, I think the best ground-strokes are almost without twist, just a tendency of top-spin; i. e., Williams's rather than McLoughlin's forehand.

T. R. PELL: My forehand is among the missing, but I think straight stroke best.

ROBERT LEROY: Top-spin. As much like S. H. Smith's forehand stroke as possible. The face of the racket should begin the swing almost exactly at right angles to the ground, but before, or really as the ball is

LeRoy's Opinion Instructive

hit, the elbow should be raised and the face of the racket should turn slightly on top of the ball. For a long stroke the top should not be very marked, but for a short stroke, say a diagonal cross-court close to the net, the top should be very emphatic. Topping the ball at the last minute has, in addition to the other advantages better known, one which is not often mentioned: it conceals direction better than any other stroke. I have observed this in many players, notably the late Kriegh Collins (in his doubles return of the service, which he made into an aggressive attack, both forehand and backhand), S. H. Smith, and occasionally N. E. Brookes, when he tops his forehand. Of the newer players, R. N. Williams's forehand has almost as much top as Collins's or Smith's, and the results are remarkable. His direction is unrevealed until the very moment of impact or even later.

Top-Spin Made Quickly, More Deceptive than When Made Slow

There is one thing about a top-spin for attack that is not often mentioned, and that is that the top forehand stroke if made *quickly* is more effective than if it takes time to make. Compare Clarence Hobart's and Williams's forehands. The direction of Hobart's stroke was always easy to foresee, and he had to be pretty well set in position to make it well. Williams, on the other hand, makes his stroke on the spur of the moment, and you cannot tell where it is going; it drops like a shot, making it difficult to return, besides which Williams can make it whether he is in position or not, in spite of his having very poor foot-work. The same is true of Brookes, but in his case his foot-work, instead of being a handicap to him, is a help.

Gives Instant's Advantage by Concealing Direction

If you will pardon my alluding to my own single characteristic stroke, I find that making the forehand stroke quickly and with a severe top to it enables me to make a fair attack and a very formidable and aggressive defence out of my ground-strokes, and this from any position in the court, almost entirely unaided by good volleying, and reinforced by a very mediocre backhand and very bad foot-work. I almost always have an instant's advantage of the other man, as my stroke reaches him

before he expects it and the closer he is to the net the more help this is to me. So far as I can see, it is possible to make a forehand stroke topped severely the preliminary to an immediate attack at the net, just as well as if the stroke were made without top-spin. I have seen Brookes do this often.

I use a moderate top-spin backhand but do not know enough about the stroke to discuss it.

A. M. SQUAIR: Top-spin.

Little's Style Recommended

G. F. TOUCHARD: I believe it depends entirely on what one wants to do. Ordinarily I believe a side-spin as Little plays to be most effective.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: To pass a man standing close to net, use top-spin; for back-court manoeuvering, use straight stroke.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Top-spin

W. M. HALL: Depends on style of game against you. Can't give a general rule.

RICHARD HARTE: Slight top.

DEAN MATHEY: I believe each stroke has its advantages and personally use a more or less straight stroke.

Seaver Favors Straight Stroke

R. C. SEAVER: I think the under-cut stroke very effective and the hardest to play against, but for a man dependent on covering a lot of ground, the straight swift stroke is best if well placed.

G. C. SHAFER: Top-spin for attack, chops and straight stroke on defense.

S. H. VOSHELL: A little top-spin.

E. H. WHITNEY: Straight stroke seems to me to be by all odds the most effective.

I. C. WRIGHT: Straight stroke without twist.

W. C. GRANT: For deep strokes, top-spin. For volleying above height of net, and to sides of court, chop.

VIII.

THE BACKHAND STROKE

FOUR CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Use the thumb along the handle to support the grip.*

2—*Turn squarely toward the ball and keep your right foot and right shoulder (for right-handed players) toward the direction the ball is to go.*

3—*Finish with the racket and arm as far ahead in the line with the ball as possible.*

4—*Do not run around the ball to avoid backhand strokes; play the right stroke and build up your weakness.*

Backhand Position Is Awkward

THE BACKHAND ground-stroke differs from the forehand stroke radically because of the position required of the body in making it, and the awkwardness of the arm-swing that results. In forehand play, the back swing is clear of the body and the turn as the blow is delivered keeps the arm free, but in backhand play the arm must swing across the body, and the pushing muscles of the upper arm rather than those that pull are used in making the stroke.

The grip of the hand too allows all the power to be *behind* the racket for a forehand shot, while

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HAROLD H. HACKETT

A Fine Example of Free Body Action in Backhand Play.

Study this splendid illustration of perfect form in backhand play. Note the position of the feet and the freedom of the arm, with the body and shoulders turned full toward the ball. This shows the typical American backhand with the elbow high.

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R. Norris Williams, 2d

End of the Champion's Backhand Stroke.

Note the bevel of the racket's head, which has passed under the ball, giving it a back-spin. Williams uses the low elbow of the English style, depending more on the twist of his shoulders for body-swing than on following the ball. Compare the position of the racket with Pell's at the end of a similar stroke, and the difference between passing over the ball and under it will be apparent.

Power Ahead of the Ball, Not Behind

on the other side the necessary grip forces the hand *above,* and in the English style, a little *ahead* of the racket, giving the effort more of a pull than a push. The shoulder is seldom behind the ball and the turning of the body for the follow through is never so pronounced in backhand play, because the striking arm is already far advanced when the stroke begins and it is difficult to shift so that the ball can be followed as long as in forehand play.

English Style Turns the Body at End

Among many of the English players, the body is turned at the end of the stroke so that it nearly faces the flight of the ball, but this side motion tends to make the racket travel across the ball in striking, rather than after it. R. F. Doherty was a notable example of this style, and the picture of Oscar Kreutzer, the German player, in this volume, illustrates the point well.

Different Grips Influence the Stroke

The grip of the racket which results from the awkward backhand position is essentially different from the freedom of the forehand stroke, and to overcome the difficulty, two distinctly different holds have come into vogue which largely influence the method of hitting the ball in backhand play. This question of the grip is more fully analyzed in the preceding chapter on this subject but its bearing on backhand play is so important that the underlying principles must be considered here, even at the risk of going over some of the ground a second time.

To be sure, the same three styles of hitting the ball that are used for the forehand stroke, i. e., the straight hit ball, the under-cut and the

Difficult to Avoid Back-Spin with English Grip

top-spinning ball, are available for backhand play, but all three and the methods of making them are vitally affected by the grip of the racket that is employed. If the unchanged grip is used for both sides, or if the thumb is wrapped around the handle with a shifted hold, it is difficult to avoid a backward bevel of the face of the racket which must be altered during the stroke by twisting the wrist, unless the under-cut or chop stroke is used.

Thumb-Around Grasp Weakens Driving Power

With the thumb around the handle, as more frequently seen abroad than in America, there is a distinct weakness in the driving power, although the grasping power to prevent the racket from turning in the hand as the ball is hit is somewhat increased. To overcome the lack of support for the handle when it rests in the crotch between the thumb and first finger, the Englishmen generally turn the grip a little more and drop the elbow so that in meeting the ball the racket will be supported by side pressure from the thumb to increase its driving power.

Rigid Joints Limit Shift in Direction

This brings with it a bent arm, and the striking arm and racket look much like the conventional scythe as they sweep forward to hit the ball, with a second bend at the wrist which is also lower than the racket head. The power of the stroke depends on the rigidity of the joints rather than their flexibility, and this very rigidity prevents the player from altering and concealing direction as much as is possible with the American style. It need hardly be proven that a bent arm is less powerful than a straight one.

Elbow Can Be Too High as Well as Too Low

In the American style, the thumb is used to support the handle of the racket, as a strut or prop against it, and this position permits the player to keep the elbow much higher during the swing. The average American carries his elbow in backhand play about level with the head of the racket and the ball when it is hit, while some prefer to keep the elbow even higher. The other extreme, however, with the elbow so high that the racket drops downward from the hand, is naturally as bad as the elbow-low position, for it also gives a bent striking arm with all its limitations.

Endless Variations of Both Styles

There are endless variations of both styles, of course, as there can be no hard and fast rules for such details, and the closer intercourse with English players in many international matches of recent years has made the types lose much of their original nationality. This difference in backhand methods is the most sharply defined contrast between the English and American schools of play, but both styles have now many devotees on each side of the Atlantic.

Body Must Be Swung Around to Face Ball

In any case, no matter which method is selected, there is no question that the position for backhand strokes requires the body swung well around, with the right shoulder toward the net, or rather toward the intended flight of the ball, and the feet nearly if not quite in line with its flight. In the English style, the whole right shoulder and even the upper part of the body are turned somewhat as on a pivot in making a cross-court stroke, because of the very lack of flexibility in the wrist of which I have already spoken, but

the more the shoulders can be kept in the line of flight, and the body weight used in a forward direction for the follow-through, the straighter and truer will the ball fly and the stronger will be the stroke.

Left Foot Should Never Be Forward

All freedom and power are robbed from the stroke if the left foot is forward or the two feet at right angles to the ball's flight so that the playing arm must strike across the body. This position kills the follow-through and the swing is cut short, finishing out to the right instead of in front.

Of the methods of actually hitting the ball, we have several to choose from, no matter in which way the racket is held and the arm swung. To be sure, the English grip and elbow position make the rolling lift stroke very difficult, although some of the English experts finish the backhand with an upturn and a sweep that carries the racket over the ball with a slight forward spin. The English method, however, more often produces a slight back-spin or under-cut, and it is difficult to overcome this with their hold.

Flexible Wrist a Great Advantage

With the racket as held in the prevailing manner, that is, with the arm nearly straight and the thumb braced up the handle, the stroke can be varied at pleasure with a slight turn of the flexible wrist. By rolling the racket backward and allowing the racket to pass under the ball, a back-spin is given, and we have an under-cut that has a tendency to keep the ball up in the air long and make its bound low. It is a good stroke for straight side-line shots, when the distance to the base-line or diagonally to where the ball would go

out of court, is so long that the stroke can be played fast without danger; but for cross-court shots it is generally difficult to play fast and hold in court.

Under-Cut Ball Easy to Volley

This stroke is easy to volley at the net, too, so that it is seldom as good a passing stroke against a volleyer. With the opponent at the base-line, however, when only driving must be considered, it is very useful, because its low "hop" is a mean, lifeless ball to handle off the ground.

Pell's a Model Backhand Stroke

The backhand rolling drop-stroke is the most useful for all-around play, although more difficult to learn. Vaile dilates at great length on the virtues of this stroke, and he is so strong in his advocacy of it that he cannot find any good in any other way of hitting the ball on the backhand side. Pell has been taken as his model of the perfect backhand, and it must be conceded that Pell's backhand is very efficient. But Pell has devoted so much attention to backhand play that he deliberately runs around as many balls as possible to favor this side, which is the weaker with most players. Running around to favor the backhand, it is plain, is as short-sighted as running around to favor the forehand.

Little Gets Top-Spin on Both Sides

Little also uses this rolling backhand effectively and his style of playing it, although less certain than Pell's, carries more "sting" than his rival, and he has maintained a better forehand stroke at the same time. Pell's case, like McLoughlin's, shows the weakness of one-sided development. In practice anyway, if not in important match play, it is wiser to devote attention to

the weaker side of one's play in order to bring that up to the general standard of the whole game. Constant practice of one stroke generally produces an unbalanced game and notable weak spots for attack.

Back-Swing Should Be Extended

The start of the backhand stroke should be as far back of the left shoulder as is possible to swing the racket, and this can be extended somewhat by increasing the backward swing of the body until the weight is carried almost entirely on the left foot before the stroke is started. At the end of the swing, the racket should finish far out in front of the right shoulder, with the weight shifted completely over onto the right foot and the balance thrown as far forward as possible, even to the point of checking the weight with a forward step at the end of the stroke, if necessary.

Racket Must Finish Low for Under-Cut

For the under-cut stroke, the racket should finish low, generally at about the height of the waist, but for the top-spinning, rolling lift stroke, the racket's swing should end much higher, generally above the shoulder. The same principles of meeting the ball and imparting the twist apply as in the forehand stroke, and the English experts get the same variations here by increasing their follow-through and imparting the twist with a turn of the wrist at the last moment before the ball leaves the racket.

But the backhand stroke without any twist at all, the straight hit ball, is perhaps more valuable for general play than either of the others. It is certainly easier to control with the thumb-up grip and permits a turn of the wrist at the last

instant to alter the direction of passing shots. As played by Larned this stroke probably reached as near perfection as the stroke has ever been produced, and it is probable that Larned's backhand was more effective than Pell's, despite the greater drop that the latter secures by his lifting stroke.

Larned's Perfect Backhand

Whether a straight hit ball, under-cut or a top-spinning ball is selected as the best style for use, it is generally wisest to use the same stroke on both sides. The player who uses mostly the lift-stroke on his forehand side and then shifts to a chop-stroke for his backhand will frequently find himself in difficulties. An experienced adversary will quickly learn which to expect and place his returns so that the kind of ball he prefers to handle will be forthcoming.

Same Twist for Both Strokes Best

The Doherty brothers emphasized in their book the advisability of "stepping into" position for the backhand stroke, and instantaneous photographs of them in action illustrate better than their text just what was meant by this. Many English players make the stroke as they did, and the typical style they used is accountable for it. The Dohertys played many of their backhand drives with the back turned almost directly toward the net, with the right foot well in advance of the left. They depended on the rotation of the body on the hips to give them follow-through.

Dohertys Almost Turned Their Backs to Net

This style certainly proved successful with these masters but I would hesitate to recommend it to others because it requires the English thumb-around grip and the low elbow to make it effective. One depends more on a sense of direction than

Difficult to Direct Stroke This Way

any view of the adversary's position also with this style of hitting the ball, and it is more difficult to change the direction of the stroke after it has been started.

End of the Swing

Start of the Stroke

Maurice McLoughlin's Cramped Backhand Stroke.

Note the cramped back-swing with the racket inside the left arm and over the shoulder. Compare the footwork as well as the swing with the pictures of Wilding's backhand.

RAYMOND D. LITTLE

MALCOLM D. WHITMAN

Two Distinctive Styles of Backhand Stroke.

Little uses a rolling lift-stroke with considerable top-spin, and his left foot has come forward here to check his weight. Whitman's backhand was made with a short swing and an under-cut. He is very tall and crouched a good deal in play, as shown here.

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OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Do you carry the elbow in English style, or prefer the American style, with elbow high?

English or American Style?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: God only knows what I do here, but I shall stick to whatever I do now, as it is my natural way of doing it. I *believe* I do both.

T. C. BUNDY: Yankee.

K. H. BEHR: Carry elbow naturally, low on volley and stroke, I believe.

F. B. ALEXANDER: My backhand is nothing to follow.

R. D. LITTLE: American style.

H. H. HACKETT: American style.

B. C. WRIGHT: As my stroke is a chop stroke like a court tennis stroke, my elbow is below my waist.

Parke and Dixon Prefer Their Own Style

J. C. PARKE: Being English, naturally I prefer our own style, but as an argument in its favor, I may suggest that it is the natural method of playing the stroke. The elbow high appears to me to be unnatural and to cramp the body and to minimize the value of distribution of weight to be obtained from foot-work.

C. P. DIXON: Elbow low in English style.

R. L. MURRAY: I prefer the low English style, but have always used the high.

G. M. CHURCH: I always carry the elbow high in the American style even on backhand pickups.

W. M. WASHBURN: American.

ELIA FOTTRELL: American style.

CLARENCE HOBART: I believe the English best.

E. B. DEWHURST: Elbow about level with the wrist; racket head slightly above wrist.

J. R. STRACHAN: American style.

C. R. GARDNER: American style mostly. English on backhand occasionally.

Dabney Uses All Styles

A. S. DABNEY: American. I prefer generally getting a top-spin but do not emphasize the high elbow, more than half way between the two styles. Sometimes I cut a high bouncing ball for a decisive stroke, as it is difficult to top-spin these on the backhand. On these shots also I sometimes get a top-spin with elbow down.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: High, I think.

F. C. INMAN: I play the American style.

W. F. JOHNSON: I carry the elbow several inches below the wrist.

N. W. NILES: More latter than former; almost on a line with forearm.

T. R. PELL: American style.

ROBERT LEROY: Elbow high, always.

Most Americans Prefer High Elbow

A. M. SQUAIR: Certainly not the English style, but the elbow is not especially high.

G. F. TOUCHARD: My elbow is in the plane of my racket on all strokes.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: English stroke is best if schooled to use it.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Elbow high, always parallel with flight of ball.

W. M. HALL: Elbow about on a level with forearm and racket.

RICHARD HARTE: American style. My elbow is slightly above the wrist.

Mathey Has Followed the Dohertys

DEAN MATHEY: I carry the elbow low, mainly because I have followed out as much as possible the advice of the Dohertys.

R. C. SEAVER: I think I carry the elbow low, but I think the American style with elbow high the strongest backhand.

G. C. SHAFER: Elbow high.

S. H. VOSHELL: American.

E. H. WHITNEY: The American style.

I. C. WRIGHT: High elbow.

W. C. GRANT: Elbow low, with top-spin.

IX.

VOLLEYING

SEVEN CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Never volley upward; all volleys should be horizontal or downward.*

2—*The volleying position should be near enough to the net to meet the ball while it is still above it. Six to twelve feet is about right.*

3—*Bevel the racket backward for horizontal volleys, and let the forearm do the work; the swing should be short and crisp.*

4—*Never move backward while making a volley; if you can't move forward to meet the ball, stand still and make your arm move forward.*

5—*Strike downward at a ball with top-spin, horizontally at a ball with under-cut.*

6—*Smashing should be confined to balls in front of the service-line; more is lost than won by smashing from the back of the court, and overhead volleying is safer there.*

7—*Don't half-volley at all; avoid the position that forces it, and step forward or back for a normal stroke if caught in that position.*

Origin of the Volley Stroke

ORIGINALLY, all strokes in lawn tennis were made after the ball had bounded, and it was not until some years after the game had reached England from its native home

The Renshaws Invented the Stroke

in India that the idea of striking the ball in the air, "on the fly" as we used to say in baseball, came into vogue. But it was only a short time after this before the value of the new stroke was well appreciated. The famous Renshaw brothers, among the earliest English champions, introduced the volley stroke and revolutionized the early development of the game.

Time and Wider Angle Gained

Two distinct advantages are offered by the volley, time and angle of attack. A ball hit in the air, particularly when close in toward the net, offers a much wider range of the antagonist's court for attack than when hit off the ground. In addition to this, much valuable time is gained by using the stroke, since the player on the other side has less time to anticipate the volleyed stroke than one played from the back of the court.

Element of Time of Great Importance

This element of time is of far greater importance than is understood by most players. A tennis player forced to one side of his court to make a return requires a certain amount of time to recover a safe position in the center, from which he can reach any stroke that his adversary may deliver to him. If he is badly hurried, his stroke falters, and he suffers soon from fast breathing, which also hurts his play immediately. To keep an opponent in such a condition is to maintain a constant attack that keeps him on the defensive.

Primarily, then, the volleying position at the net is the best position for attack, and by the volleying position I mean anywhere in front of the service-line, for it is next to impossible in fast

play to hit a ball off the ground from in front of the service-line. Now, two players cannot survive long with both at the net against each other because the closeness of their positions does not afford either time enough to anticipate the other's attack, and one or the other must lose at once. Hence, it is necessary that one of them must retire to the back of his court and assume the defensive when his adversary outgenerals him and gains the coveted net position.

Both Sides Cannot Live at the Net

But the reader must not reason from this that it is always safe to make a dash for the net if the other man has not anticipated him. On the contrary, a very dangerous attack can be maintained from the base-line, and blindly rushing to the net is as short-sighted as camping indefinitely at the back of the court. There are correct principles which should be learned to show how and when it is safe to take the volleying position. This subject will be fully covered in a later chapter under position play.

Blind Net-Rushing Is Fool-Hardy

The volley stroke itself can be made at any time until the ball touches the ground, of course, but it is a safe general rule to lay down that it should always be made at the height of the net or above. There are many times when one is forced to play a lifting volley from below the height of the net, but such a stroke instantly becomes defensive, destroying the very life of the volley, and should be avoided whenever possible. Caught in the front of the court, with a dropping low ball, there is no choice but to volley upward, but as a foreseen and anticipated stroke it is un-

Volley Should Not Be Made from Below Top of Net

English School of Low Volleying

sound. One should not intentionally assume a position where such a stroke will be necessary.

I know that this advice is not in accordance with one common English method of playing the volley stroke, for many strong English players purposely volley underhand, with an upward tendency. But this comes from their faulty position for volleying. The English school teaches the volleyer to hang back anywhere from six to ten feet more than Americans believe good tactics, and as a consequence of this position you sometimes see opposing volleyers in England both near the service-line, exchanging short lifting volleys, when an American would dart forward and kill the ball.

Deep Position Condemned

I believe this English volleying position to be unsound, and certainly the closer American methods have forced some of the English authorities to abandon their first theories, and advise a closer position for this stroke. The Dohertys shifted their position for attack closer to the net after their first experiences with American tactics, and others who have followed them to this country have shown a tendency to come in closer to volley. The old English style does not allow the same sting in the attack, and permits the antagonist to creep forward against such a weak attack, and sometimes to turn the tables on the deep volleyer.

If it is accepted then that the correct position for a volleyer is close enough forward to meet the ball while it is still higher than the net, one must be governed somewhat by the character

How Close Should You Come Up?

of the adversary's strokes in deciding how close he should come in. If he resorts to lobbing to dislodge the volleyer, then the position should be a little further back, while on the other hand, if he uses a short dropping stroke that falls below the level of the net very soon after crossing it, it is evident that the position must be very close in to receive the ball at the necessary height. But again we are trespassing on the ground to be covered under position play. Generally speaking, the best volleying position is from 6 to 12 feet from the net.

Half Swing for a Horizontal Volley

For the horizontal volley, that is, the ball that is flying nearly horizontally when struck and is met at a height from the waist to the shoulder, the stroke should be made with less swing than is advisable for a ground stroke. The impact of the ball itself will furnish much of the power that is required to give it speed on the return flight, but it should be met with a forward motion of the arm and a snap of the wrist to give the shot crispness. The forearm is used very much more than the upper arm in this stroke, and when close to the net it will provide all the power necessary for a short volley across the opponent's court.

Face of the Racket Should Be Beveled Back

It is generally necessary to bevel the face of the racket slightly backward in making a horizontal volley. The ball, even when played while still rising, has a tendency to drop quickly after being hit, and to overcome this the bevel of the racket is used. This has an inclination to give the ball a slight under-cut, which will in its turn tend to

keep the bound low and somewhat embarrass the opponent in making the next return.

The Short Cross-Court Volley

The amount of power required from the arm, particularly the upper part of the arm, will depend largely on the length of the stroke you are playing. For the short cross-volley, it is best played with very little swing of the arm, just a slight forward motion and a twist of the forearm which turns the ball off to the side, and a snap of the wrist that adds crispness to the stroke and makes the ball fly faster; the backward bevel of the face adds a little backspin to keep down the bound and lifts the ball over the net and makes it drop quickly again.

A Slight Downward Motion Needed

These horizontal volleys should be struck with a slight downward motion of the arm, and this is more accentuated in handling a ball with top-spin than any other. Here the tendency of the twist is to make the ball fly upward from the racket and the downward angle of the stroke helps to overcome this, while the beveled face sends the ball away high enough to clear the net.

Easier to Volley Under-Cut Ball

It is distinctly easier to volley an undercut ball at the net than one with top-spin, and this results from the rotation whose effect is to increase the speed and crispness with which it goes away from the volleyer's racket. But it is necessary to make allowance for this tendency in order to avoid netting the balls. A horizontal stroke with the face of racket bevelled back will generally do the trick successfully.

This stroke can be played either forehanded or backhanded with almost equal facility and is

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F. B. ALEXANDER

Low Forehand Volley of a Dropping Ball.

This illustrates a most difficult stroke, the lifting volley from a dropping ball. The player has been caught too far from the net and is jumping forward to intercept a dangerous attempt at a pass.

R. Norris Williams, 2d

Horizontal Backhand Volley from Near the Net.

The champion is shown here trying to intercept a pass along his left line. Note the wide spread of his legs and the turned body which increases his reach.

Little Arm Motion Needed

probably the only stroke in the game that is as easily played on both sides. All the ground-strokes, the lob and the smash, are more difficult on the backhand side, but not so the horizontal and low volley. This is chiefly because little arm motion is needed for these strokes, which require only a stiffness of the wrist instead of the flexibility needed by the greater impact of the other strokes.

Lifting Volley a Defensive Stroke

For a lifting volley, that is, the volleyed ball that must be met and returned from a height lower than the net, more motion of the arm and less of the wrist is needed. In fact, a stiff wrist will often be found better for the execution of this really difficult shot. The difficulty of making the stroke and the increased danger of error added to the loss of attacking power from its low point of starting, helps to emphasize the folly of being caught in a position when it is necessary to use it.

How It Is Made

But there are times, no matter whether one uses the English or American position for volleying, there are times when it becomes necessary to play this shot, and the method cannot be studied too closely. A full arm sweep, starting half as far back as a ground-stroke, a stiff wrist and a full follow through are needed to get the ball off well, and, as in the horizontal volley, the face of the racket should be beveled back a little to keep the bound down and the ball well up over the net.

Karl Behr and one or two other successful players use occasionally a horizontal or dropping volley with a long sweeping stroke like a fore-

Behr's Odd Drive Volley

hand lift drive, with plenty of top-spin, but this style cannot be recommended. Its success in one case is no vindication of the soundness of the principle involved, and in the hands of nine men this play would fail when one man would succeed with it. The under-cut is distinctly preferred for these strokes to the forward top-spin, for its tendency is to keep the ball out of the net, the barrier that ruins many more volleys than the outside lines of the antagonist's court.

Most Americans Overdo the Smash

Now we come to consideration of the smash. This play is nothing more than an overhead volley played so fast that it is intended to kill from its speed alone, irrespective of whether it is placed out of the opponent's reach or not. In America, the smash is very much overdone. Our impetuous temperament develops a tendency to make sensational strokes, and the smash is probably the most spectacular of all. The added speed put into this play increases the risk of error and is a drain on physical strength in a long match, so it follows logically that any ball that can be killed as well by placing an overhead volley out of reach with less speed, less risk of error and less physical strain, should not be smashed.

H. L. Doherty the Best at Killing Without It

H. L. Doherty, M. D. Whitman, W. A. Larned and R. N. Williams, 2nd, the present champion, are all exponents of this method, and of these Doherty was perhaps the most skilful of all in safely tucking away an overhead volley into some impossible position for an ace. He never seemed to be hitting hard, but a short lob was almost invariably killed as effectively with-

out speed as when played by the most extreme smashers of the American contingent. G. P. Sheldon, one of the national champions in doubles; Dwight Davis and M. E. McLoughlin all leaned toward the other method, the use of speed rather than direction for killing overhead.

Judicious Mixture of Two Styles

Of these two schools, one can take his choice, and it would seem that a judicious mixture of both were better than following either blindly. Certain returns can be handled better with a smash and others with an overhead volley. A high horizontal shot is easier to volley because the angle of impact is so much more direct, the ball coming toward the racket to meet it; while the dropping ball of a lob requires a more accurate calculation to avoid missing the lines if placed close to the edge, and is generally handled best with a smash depending on its speed for success.

Overhead Volleys Comparatively Easy

The overhead volley of a horizontal ball calls for a full swing, a sharp impact with less twist than any other stroke of the game (unless it be the lob) and a medium follow through. The success of the shot depends more on direction than the mere execution of the play. It is an easy stroke to make and not difficult to direct. If the adversary has left an opening, it should afford an ace on the next play, but if he is well covered up and the ball is over the centre of the net, a deep volley into one corner will often open up the way for a clean ace on the next return. This stroke is so simple and affords so many chances to kill that the experienced player seldom offers his opponent such an opening. Clothier

Clothier Fine on High Volleys

handles these volleys, shoulder high or above, better than any other player we have now, although Larned used to be very deadly on such openings.

Short Smashes Should Never Be Missed

The smash is a stroke that is properly used only on a lob, for no other return offers the dropping lifeless ball needed for its execution. On a short lob, that is, a ball that falls within twelve of fifteen feet of the net, the risk of error is small, and even this decreases rapidly as the distance to the net is lessened. When within ten feet of the net, it is always safe to hit the ball hard, and when so close as this it is seldom difficult to earn a clean ace by smashing the ball right "through" the other man.

Never Ease Up on This Stroke

The deeper the ball to be smashed, the more difficult it is to handle, the danger of missing increasing very rapidly, and when a lob drops back of the service-line, it depends entirely on the individual skill of the player whether it pays better to smash than to volley the return. To ease up on a smash generally results in ruining the stroke. If the full power and speed cannot be risked, it is generally better to change the stroke to a volley and wait for a better opening for the attempt to kill.

Smashing Position Described

The position the player ought to assume for a smash varies somewhat according to individual style. Little lays down the rule that under a dropping ball, the player ought to stand so that it would strike him in the right eye if allowed to fall. This may be wise, but I should incline toward allowing the ball to drop perhaps six or

eight inches more to the right. To make the stroke directly over the head has a tendency to throw the balance backward at the end of the stroke, and makes the recovery slower. No matter whether the smash is expected to win outright or not, the player should instantly recover his balance and prepare for another stroke, for he never can be *sure* the rally is over on even the hardest smash. His opponent may make a sensational recovery and put up another lob or try for a pass.

Balance Must Be Recovered Quickly

To take the ball in front of you often results in hitting the net, and this habit of standing too far back for a smash is one of the worst of faults, one that is seldom to be seen among the better players.

Making the smash requires the fullest action possible. The racket should start well behind the back with a full back swing, and come forward with rapidly increasing energy, striking the ball with a sharp impact. The entire body weight should be thrown into the blow, and there should be a full body swing and follow through to add to the power of the stroke. No stroke of the game is played with such abandon, for as this shot is expected to end the rally nine times out of ten, the attitude is one of finality that permits the player to literally throw himself at the ball regardless of what may follow.

Fullest Action Required to Smash Well

The ball should always be met with an "open" racket, that is, with the full face of the stringing exposed, the face being at right angles to the flight of the ball, and it is essential that

Use an "Open" Racket and No Twist

the ball should be struck in the center of the strings. Twist is almost unnecessary, although some players have an inclination to wrap the racket around the ball slightly, as in the service, and this has a tendency to keep the ball somewhat better under control.

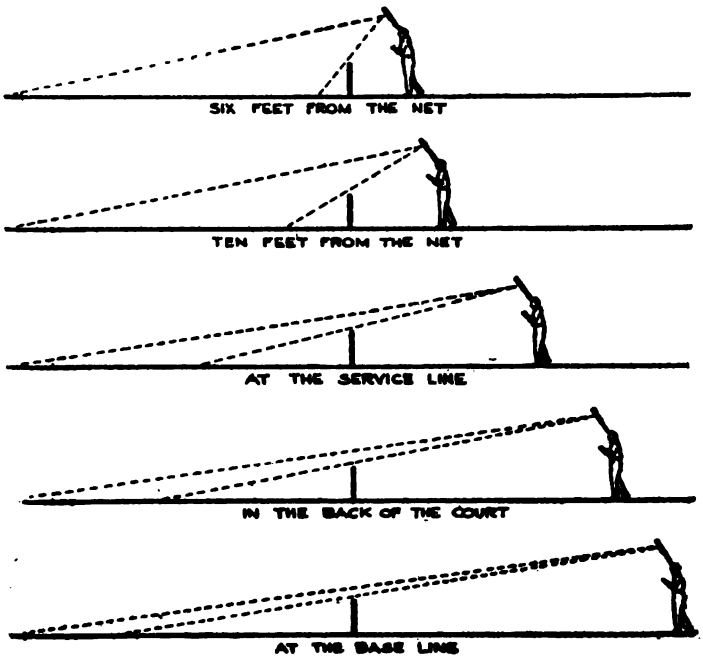
Placing a Killing Smash

As to placing the smash, it is often better to use the center of the court than to risk the edges, as the shot cannot be placed to within a few feet of the desired spot, as in the slower volleys where the control of the direction is more certain. If the antagonist is close to you, it is generally better to play directly at him, as it will allow him too short a time to prepare for the next stroke to have any hope for success. If the adversary is far back in his court, smashing at him often loses the ace, because he will then have ample time to let the ball bound and replay it with another lob or a drive that will find you off your balance, perhaps, from the abandon of the stroke. A hard smash may be directed toward the side of the court without taking liberties with the last few feet at the edge, and still have room enough to score the ace. The very speed of the stroke will make it extremely difficult for the other man to make the return even if he should reach the ball.

Handling a Deep Lob

When a really deep lob has to be handled, that is, one that is about to drop within the last ten feet of the court, smashing is extremely risky. The angle of open court that can be seen over the net is very small from far back in the court, especially on a smashed ball hit so fast

that it has little or no drop, and the risk of error is so great that the game is not worth the candle. (See diagram.) In addition, the opponent has so much more time to anticipate the direction of such a smash that its chances for winning are



Chances for Success in Smashing from Different Distances

materially lessened. Notwithstanding the fact that some players like McLoughlin succeed with it at greater distance, the smash is a stroke to be used only from in front of the service-line.

Better Use Volley on Deep Balls

It is always better on deep lobs to use a deep volley and creep up again toward the net to wait for a better chance to kill. In the Western section of the country, some of the players have

developed a way of "bucking" the ball on such a lob that is safe, although it looks very ungainly. They get under the ball and, with the racket beveled sharply upward, push it, rather than strike it, a deep slow volley that keeps the opponent away from the net and gives them time to run in themselves to wait for a shorter lob that can be killed.

Stop-Volley Not Well Used

The stop-volley is a variation of the low horizontal volley that is very useful and can be made much better use of than is commonly seen in tournaments nowadays. Holcombe Ward was an adept at this stroke and used it with telling effect, varying it with a deep volley that kept his antagonist constantly guessing as to whether to go forward or hang back for a deep ball. This stroke can be played only from the front of the court, and it is very risky unless the volleyer is within ten feet of the net.

How to Make the Stroke

If in this position, however, it is a deadly stroke in the hands of a thinking player who chooses the right time to use it and does not use it too often. Either forehand or backhand, the racket just meets the ball, with a stiff wrist and little or no motion of the arm. The face of the racket should be beveled back just a trifle unless very close to the net, and a slight flick of the wrist added if the ball lacks impact or the net is too far away for a dead wrist to carry the ball over. The object of the stroke is to make the ball just clear the net and then drop dead. If the opponent is far back in his court, particularly if he is expecting a deep return, he will probably

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WILLIAM A. LARNED

A Fine Stop-Volley at the Net.

Note the short grip of the racket so apparent in this picture, a marked characteristic of this stroke. Also the perfect freedom of shoulders and arm that always marked Larned's play.

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GUSTAVE F. TOUCHARD

Backhand Half-Volley of a Short Ball.

There are very few pictures in existence of half-volley strokes, but this shows Touchard just about to "trap" a short ball near the net with a backhand half-volley. The racket is directly in front of the foot, which shows the absence of swing in making these strokes.

be unable to get forward in time to get the low bound.

Grip Should Be Relaxed a Trifle

On most stop-volleys, particularly on those made close to the net, the grip on the racket should be relaxed a trifle just as the ball is hit, and this helps to kill the rebound.

This stop-volley can be varied well if the ball is turned off sharply to one side or the other, according to which side seems most exposed by the adversary's position. Ward used this variation constantly and beveled his racket sidewise as well as backward to cut the ball out of reach. Beals Wright was also exceptionally clever at the stroke, and Karl Behr uses it effectively at times.

Weight Must Never Move Backward

One cardinal point should be kept in mind in all volley strokes and this is the strict rule never to move backward as the blow is delivered. Nothing will ruin an otherwise good volley stroke more certainly than the tendency to draw the weight back as the racket meets the ball. This is even more important in volleying than in playing ground strokes, because the whole swing of the arm and weight are not pronounced in volleying. Many volley strokes are played without the body's weight, and their success depends largely on a slight motion of the wrist or arm. To offset this with a backward motion means to ruin the stroke.

Lob-Volley Occasionally Used

The lob-volley, a lob played on the volley, is more correctly a lob than a volley and will be treated under that head.

The half-volley might similarly be considered more of a ground stroke than a volley, but

as it is really played from the false volleying position, it will be treated here.

Half-Volley Always a Tactical Blunder

Primarily, I consider the half-volley under all circumstances to be an error. One simply should not play the stroke, and there seems little excuse for being forced to play it. When you are far enough back for the ball to bound at all, you have time to go further back or come forward and volley the ball properly. If caught in such a position, a man's judgment should decide whether he should go forward or back. If his opponent is coming forward, the probabilities are that he should retire or he will be caught on the next play without hope of defending his position. Conversely, if the opponent is retiring, he should go forward and, meeting the ball with a low volley, try to place his return deep enough to be safely in the net position for the next shot.

A Common Stroke in England

It is quite common to half-volley in England, but the use of the stroke has been a natural sequence of the faulty volleying position that they use over there. To volley from near the service-line means to court such embarrassment, and to half-volley in return is simply to play a weak defensive shot that entails much risk for even the most expert users of the stroke, without any compensating advantage.

Eaves and Caridia Attacked by Half-Volley

Dr. Eaves was perhaps the most expert player of the half-volley the world has seen, and he practiced the stroke constantly in match play and with some success. In his hands and as used by some other Englishmen, notably G. A. Caridia, it has been used as a weapon of attack, but its chief merit, if it has any merit at all, lies in gain-

ing time to catch the opponent out of position. But even this could have been done better by stepping in a yard or two and volleying.

Sometimes Used as a Step Toward the Net

Eaves frequently came only half way forward on his service, perhaps to just behind the service-line, and then stepping in to meet the next return, would half-volley it deeply and then go on in two or three yards further to take up his usual volleying position for the attack. But a man who was faster on his feet than Eaves—the genial doctor was notoriously slow in this regard—would have secured the same position by one rush without half-volleying, and have risked much less in doing it.

Williams sometimes half-volleys now, but his use of the stroke comes almost entirely from his constant desire to play a rising ball and keep his opponent on the run.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Do you consider it sound to volley from the service-line?

Is It Sound to Volley from Service-Line?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.

T. C. BUNDY: Only a few can do it successfully.

K. H. BEHR: As part of advance to net only.

F. B. ALEXANDER: No; exceptions, one should be able to do so.

R. D. LITTLE: No.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: Never.

J. C. PARKE: Distinctly so.

C. P. DIXON: Not as a rule, but volleying from service-line should be cultivated to a certain extent as it certainly offers an effective mode of attack.

R. L. MURRAY: No.

G. M. CHURCH: No.

W. M. WASHBURN: Only when unavoidable.

Very Few Find It So

ELIA FOTTRELL: No.

CLARENCE HOBART: No.

E. B. DEWHURST: No.

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

C. R. GARDNER: No.

A. S. DABNEY: No.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I think it preferable and more aggressive to get in closer to the net.

F. C. INMAN: No, only when caught there.

W. F. JOHNSON: No.

N. W. NILES: For some, yes; not for most.

T. R. PELL: No.

ROBERT LEROY: No.

A. M. SQUAIR: Not generally.

G. F. TOUCHARD: No.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.
W. M. HALL: No.
RICHARD HARTE: No.
DEAN MATHEY: Only when you are forced to do so.
R. C. SEAVER: No.
G. C. SHAFER: Yes.
S. H. VOSHELL: No.
E. H. WHITNEY: Sometimes, not very often.
I. C. WRIGHT: No.
W. C. GRANT: Volleying, I stand close to net if opponent is in short court, and just inside of service-line when opponent is in deep court.

Do you consider half-volleying ever aggresive?

Is Half-Volleying Ever Aggressive

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.
T. C. BUNDY: Seldom.
K. H. BEHR: No.
F. B. ALEXANDER: Seldom.
R. D. LITTLE: Not as a habit.
H. H. HACKETT: No.
B. C. WRIGHT: No.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: Yes.
R. L. MURRAY: No.
G. M. CHURCH: No.
W. M. WASHBURN: Rarely.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes, for keeping the net.
CLARENCE HOBART: Sometimes.
E. B. DEWHURST: No.
J. R. STRACHAN: Very seldom.
C. R. GARDNER: No, although I have seen some men make remarkably good half-volleys.

As Williams Does It, Yes

A. S. DABNEY: If it can be done well like Williams, but not otherwise.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Extremely difficult to be aggressive.
F. C. INMAN: Yes.

W. F. JOHNSON: Only when done by masters of the stroke as Caridia or Williams.

N. W. NILES: Yes, but not usually.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: Very seldom. Only when impossible to make another stroke.

Few Recommend the Stroke

A. M. SQUAIR: These may be part of an attack, i. e., may be necessary while on the way to the net. In themselves they are defensive, not aggressive.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Very rarely.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Very exceptionally.

W. M. HALL: Only luckily perhaps.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: I believe the half-volley is at best a defensive stroke, or at least it should be so.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: No.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes, if it gets your opponent out of position.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: No.

Do you consider underhand volleying aggressive?

Is Underhand Volleying Aggressive?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.

T. C. BUNDY: No. Volleying from service-line, half-volley, etc., only defensive.

K. H. BEHR: Sometimes it is, especially a side top-spin volley.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Often.

R. D. LITTLE: The higher the volley the more aggressive, meaning usually closer to the net.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: No.

Parke and Dixon Both Say "No"

J. C. PARKE: No.

C. P. DIXON: No, except on very rare occasions.

R. L. MURRAY: No, absolutely not.

G. M. CHURCH: Only in the case of a few players, who hit underhand volleys with a big top-spin.

W. M. WASHBURN: Often.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Sometimes.

Many Opinions Differ

CLARENCE HOBART: No, but very necessary.

E. B. DEWHURST: Too risky and not aggressive; the nearer the net the better.

J. R. STRACHAN: W. M. Johnston and Melville Long often use the underhand volley and they are two of the best volleyers that I have seen.

C. R. GARDNER: Hardly, but a very good underhand volleyer may make it so.

A. S. DABNEY: No. Only do it when you have to.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Extremely difficult to be aggressive.

F. C. INMAN: Yes. Any volleying is aggressive as quick play to keep other player in poor position.

W. F. JOHNSON: No.

Clothier's Style Commended

N. W. NILES: Not usually; sometimes Clothier makes it so.

T. R. PELL: Sometimes.

ROBERT LEROY: No, except once in a while, when meeting a long slow shot or lob near the base-line by a long underhand volley on which to run to the net.

A. M. SQUAIR: These may be part of an attack, i. e., may be necessary while on the way to the net. In themselves they are defensive, not agressive.

G. F. TOUCHARD: No.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes, if close to the net.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: Yes, it can be made so.

Majority Against It

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: No, I believe one should always volley down when possible and think therefore that an underhand volley is essentially a defensive volley.

R. C. SEAVER: Not so aggressive as over or side hand, because it gives your opponent a much better opportunity to get the ball.

G. C. SHAFER: No.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

Grant Thinks It Prevents Lobbing

E. H. WHITNEY: Usually not.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: No, but it is safer, as it prevents being lobbed overhead.

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MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN

Extreme American Twist Service

In this remarkable photograph, McLoughlin is shown balanced on one foot just before hitting the ball. The backward bend of the body is necessary in order to strike the ball upward and give it the necessary forward twist. The sharp bend of the elbow allows the racket head to drop low and increase the upward swing.

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THOMAS C. BUNDY

Reverse Twist American Service

The racket is moving upward in this picture and the ball is clearly shown against its strings. Bundy is probably the most effective user of this delivery and he has perfected the service so that he controls the ball very well. The racket passes from right to left across in front of the player.

X.

THE SERVICE

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Serve from as high up in the air as possible.*
2—*Every service must be played with more or less twist.*
3—*Don't try to make your first service too fast, and don't let your second be so weak it can be handled severely. A weak second service is a deadly sin.*
4—*Place your service to the unexpected side, or to the weakest point of the adversary.*
5—*Don't use the American twist service unless you have ample physical stamina and keep in perfect condition.*

Wonderful Accuracy of the Service

IT IS truly wonderful the accuracy that is reached in serving. It looks easy enough to serve the ball into a court thirteen and a half by twenty-one feet, but the space is really much smaller than it seems because the greater part of the prescribed area near the net is impossible to reach. With a fast service, the ball drops almost invariably within the last six feet of the service court and in championship play generally in the last three feet.

The problem among fairly good players

therefore is to serve the ball into a strip of court some fifty-five feet away from the server, fourteen feet wide and from three to six feet deep. And what is more difficult still, to outwit the striker-out by placing the ball in this small space so he cannot handle it easily.

Narrow Space Available

The reason for the overhead service is apparent on the surface, for it is necessary to get as far up over the net as possible in order to bring the ball down inside of the court while still serving fast. There is practically no other way to serve with speed. The stroke is like an overhead volley and must be executed with speed and necessarily with even more accuracy than the volley.

Many Variations of Service

There are scores of variations of the method of overhead serving, but all are made high up over the right (or left, for a left-handed player) shoulder, and the ball is given a twist in striking, in varying degrees from the almost straight slow old-fashioned service to the most extreme American twist. The reverse American twist can hardly be classed as an overhead service, as the ball is hit out to the side and barely above the height of the shoulder.

How High to Throw Up the Ball

The height at which the ball should be thrown varies a good deal. R. F. Doherty used to toss the ball from six to eight feet in the air and wait majestically with racket poised behind him to strike when it fell. On the other hand, his own brother went to the other extreme and tossed the ball barely high enough to clear his head, striking it just as it reached its maximum height, and then with a racket that did not reach

as high as he could stretch. Somewhere between these two is doubtless the best point, neither too high nor too low, but the exact height must be governed by the style and the individual preference of the server.

Height Must Be Governed by Preference

As the server looks up to strike the ball he should bend over somewhat backward, the amount of this bend again depending on the style of the service adopted, and the amount of twist desired. In bending backward, you are able to reach more directly up into the air, and as the body straightens out again, the out-twist is put on the ball and the forward motion needed to give the ball speed is added. In the American twist service, this bending backward is exaggerated to a very marked degree, but the extra bend is for the purpose of striking the ball while the racket is still moving in an upward direction. However, the American services will be taken up shortly.

Bending Backward Depends on Twist

The need for twisting the ball is most imperative. Hardly any service can be made with speed unless the ball is made to rotate on its own axis. The twist is needed to keep it more directly on its course—in other words, to control the ball better—and it is also necessary to bring it down inside the court. This whole question of twist or rotation and the underlying principles involved will be taken up in more detail in another chapter, but in considering the service, it must be remembered that twist is essential to success.

The Need of Twist in All Services

Omitting from consideration for the moment the newer American twist services, it may safely be said that ninety per cent. of the services deliv-

Overhead Out-Twists Most Useful

ered among good tennis players in all lands are overhead out-twists and this delivery is unquestionably the most useful method known. The speed and low, deep bound necessary to keep the striker well back is provided and the control of direction is also well developed. Another important point in its favor is that this style of service is economical of the player's strength and its motion is inclined to carry the server rapidly forward from the baseline, so that if he follows the delivery up toward the net to volley the first return, it will help him get started in the right direction without loss of time. In fact, this delivery is so much in unison with a forward step that it was a common habit of the extreme net players not many years ago to make the service while moving forward, practically on the run, until a new foot-fault rule was put on the statute books to prevent this style of play.

Service Used to Be Made on the Run

It is advisable, then, for the young player to learn this service before any other and to drill himself in its use until he is able to serve the ball into the opposing court with great regularity. A common fault in its use, however, must be avoided, in the desire to play the first ball so fast that it seldom lands inside the court. Almost invariably the man who tries to serve his first ball with extreme severity moderates his second service so much that it is distinctly weak.

Weak Second Service a Deadly Sin

A weak second service is a deadly sin, because it ruins the chance to run in safely, because it turns the attack directly over to the striker, because it opens the way to the most dangerous

passing shots, because it permits the adversary to pound this second ball to almost any part of the court at pleasure, and because of its moral effect on the server, discouraging him in future play.

Two Average Deliveries the Best

Two services of average speed for first and second delivery are much stronger than one terrific "swipe" and a weak "pop" second delivery. The man who keeps a good average fast pace on his first service has to make less shift in his method of hitting for the second and is less likely to double fault. The practice of the first delivery also helps him to guage his error and he is able to keep fair speed on the second ball with less danger of a double fault. In short, the extremely fast first ball is so radically different from an easy second delivery that it does not help the player in guaging his second delivery, and he consequently takes no chances by playing close to the net or to the court-lines, and makes such an easy service that the ball is frequently killed outright, and generally the attack is turned against him on the next stroke.

Practice Until Double Faults Are Eliminated

Now, having acquired a fairly fast overhead, out-twist delivery that is well under control, and a second delivery that is of the same style, but just a trifle slower and a trifle higher to be sure of clearing the net, every player should practice both until he is reasonably certain of avoiding the deadly pitfall of double faults. The next point is the control of the direction. This is of the utmost importance, and no style of service should be adopted that does not permit of the most perfect control.

Placing the Service

The average player of little experience considers his duty done in serving when the ball is safely delivered into the opponent's court; he does not see the far greater possibilities of attack in placing the service. To be sure, the latitude for placing is small, but there is ample range to outwit the adversary in even the small space allowed, as his time is short in which to shift his position to meet the attack.

Selecting the Best Point for Attack

Before making the delivery, the position of the adversary should be carefully noted, and the position of his arm and racket to see whether he is anticipating a backhand or a forehand stroke. If you have studied your adversary or are familiar with his play, you may already know his favorite strokes and what his attitudes mean. If he is a better player of forehand than backhand strokes, naturally his weak spot will be on the other side, while the reverse will sometimes be the case. Possibly he will habitually lean in one direction or the other in anticipating the service, to be in position for the stroke he prefers, and this at once should give the signal to place the ball on the opposite side of the court.

Outwitting the Man Who Gets "Set"

I remember well one notable case like this that will illustrate my point. Wylie Grant, a good tournament player, plays a ball from either the backhand or forehand side with much skill, providing it comes just where he expects it. He gets "set" in position for a certain stroke long before the ball reaches him, and if the server on the opposite side gives him what he is expecting, he will often make so fast a return that the other man

Serving to the Unexpected Side

is passed clean or immediately placed in difficulties. Experienced players who used their heads, however, have generally outwitted him by watching his position closely. They delayed their service until Grant got "set," then placed the ball on the opposite side from which it was expected, and the return was weakened instantly; from the unexpected side, he seldom made a dangerous attack.

When Running in With the Service

When the server is running in to volley, new problems complicate the service that must be taken into consideration. If the striker is weak on the backhand side, the server should consistently place the service to his backhand side until he finds that it is being anticipated. The striker may run around the backhand attack to get the ball on his forehand, or he may anticipate this attack by bringing his racket over into position for this return so that he is able to handle it better. Then an occasional service placed to the other extreme edge of the court will bring him back into a normal receiving position again, or possibly win an ace outright by the very unexpectedness of the play.

Anticipating a Certain Favored Return

If the opponent is found to select one direction regularly for his return from a given position, this in itself can be anticipated often with success. For instance, the striker may cross-court five balls for every one that he plays down the line from a backhand return. In this case, it is well to serve to the backhand and watch for the cross-court return, leaning a little to that side of the centre of the court at the risk of the unex-

pected line pass. Or the opposite may be the case, and can be anticipated similarly.

Centre Theory Helps the Server

The centre theory is perhaps of more value to the server than at any other point of the play. The most difficult problem the server has to solve is to get to the net safely in order to secure the volleying position. The centre theory is more fully covered in the chapter on position play, but so far as it refers to the service, it is the principle of placing the service in the centre of the court (that is, in the corners of the service courts nearest the centre of the whole court) in order to keep the opponent in the centre of his court, directly in front of you as you stand at the middle of the net to volley. This shuts off his chances for fast side-line drives, because from the centre any fast ball that will pass you must be aimed out of court and a slow ball will give you more time to reach it.

Serving Down the Centre of the Court

Adopting this centre theory, which is most valuable in a volleying net attack, the server should stand all the time very close to the centre of his base-line to serve. By shifting a yard to the right or left he can serve into the left or right court, and still keep his delivery right down the centre by placing each ball close to the dividing line of his opponent's service courts.

Against a right-handed player, this will bring his backhand presented to the delivery always in the right court and his forehand in the left court. If his backhand is weak, this will make the right court the more productive and the left court always dangerous if his forehand stroke is severe. However, this attack can be varied

START OF THE STROKE

END OF THE SWING

Two Views of McLoughlin's Wonderful Service.

Note the extreme wrist work required in this delivery. At the start, the racket drops down at a sharp angle from the forearm, and at the end, it swings the other way, with a sharp bend of the wrist that gives the side spin to the ball.

MAURICE MCLOUGHLIN

H. L. DOHERTY

Two Extreme Styles of Service Delivery.

McLoughlin puts every ounce of his strength in his service, while Doherty required very little effort to get away his low-bounding and innocent-looking delivery. The American service is undoubtedly more effective, if it does not sap too much of the player's strength to make it.

Point of Attack Must Be Varied

whenever one finds an opponent is handling these deliveries in an embarrassing manner. If the left court service is being pounded with a forehand drive that is too fast to handle, an occasional service far out to the adversary's backhand toward the extreme edge of the court, will often catch him by surprise, and if it does not score a clean ace will embarrass his return in consequence so that an easy chance for a kill will result.

Backhand Weakness Offers Openings

Often the backhand weakness of an antagonist will make it advisable to work on the centre theory only in the right-hand court where it attacks his backhand, and to place the service far to the edge of the court regularly in the left court. In this case the path of the server in running in must be further to his right to cover the dangerous opening along his right side-line, unless the opponent has shown a marked tendency to cross-court his backhand returns.

Serving from the Extreme Corner

I have sometimes found it advisable against a player whose backhand weakness was pronounced to serve in the right court from the centre and the left from the extreme corner to shut out the other man's forehand shot, and then an occasional quick service down the centre line, will often surprise him into a weak return or an outright error, particularly if served from the extreme position at the corner that would indicate another attempt to force the weak backhand side.

The American twist services have revolutionized most standard theories of serving in lawn tennis, and to-day they are a recognized and

Value of the American Twist

orthodox feature of the game. In a previous volume published over ten years ago by the present writer, the opinion was expressed that these extreme services entailed so much physical effort and forced such a constant physical strain on the player's endurance, that it was doubtful whether the effort was not too great to make the delivery profitable. Certainly, in some cases it has proven to be so, but there have been so many cases in which this service has proven a weapon of attack that has won matches, tournaments and championships—so many individuals who have consistently withstood the strain on back, arms and shoulders and still shown the needed strength to win, that I must modify this position somewhat.

Little's Opinion Against It

Raymond Little, whose opinions I consider as sound as those of any other writer on the game, declared only two years ago in his "Tennis Tactics" (p. 34): "Personally, I believe the American twist service requires a waste of energy and that such a strong defence has been built up against it that it has greatly lost its former effectiveness."

McLoughlin Also Limits Its Value

Maurice McLoughlin, perhaps the most successful of all users of this stroke, declares in his recently published book (p. 74): "I do not advise the average player to attempt an extreme amount of break through the use of the American service. * * * The body, principally the back, must snap forward as the racket comes onto the ball; at the same time this must be accompanied with a twisting motion which I have heretofore described

as the 'rotation' at the waist. All this creates a tremendous amount of strain on the back muscles, one that very few players are physically capable of long withstanding."

Twists Lose Their Terrors When Understood

Unless played extremely well and varied constantly, opponents soon become accustomed to the erratic bound of the twist services and they lose much of their terrors. However, they are played effectively by many players in these days, and there is no question that these deliveries can be mastered and used successfully by others in match play, provided always that the user is physically strong, particularly in his back muscles, and keeps his physical condition well up to the mark when long matches are expected, for this service is a heavy drain on the endurance.

Ward's Discovery Partly Accidental

The American twist service was invented by Holcombe Ward and its introduction was not so much a sequence of deliberate plans to accomplish a certain result as an accidental discovery stumbled upon while he was working in another direction. Ward was experimenting with a service that would get him started quicker in his dash toward the net. He was always a volleyer and poor in ground strokes, so that it was imperative for him to reach the net very quickly. He found by starting his racket for the swing far down behind his back and bringing it up with great rapidity and striking the ball slightly before it reached the top of its swing that the momentum carried him forward so rapidly that he got into motion much quicker than with the old style.

But he soon found he was hitting the ball

New Spin Made Ball Act Strangely

on the upward swing and with a rising motion of the racket that gave the ball a new spin which made it act strangely. The ball twisted and turned in an unexpected manner and then bounded from the ground in still stranger fashion. This was the beginning of the American twist service, and Ward did not know until long afterward the revolutionizing effect that his new discovery would have on the game.

Weakness of the Reverse Twist

Curiously enough, the reverse twist service was invented at just about the same time, a little ahead in fact, by Malcolm Whitman, but this was an attempt at a puzzling service pure and simple, yet it has never been so successful as the other delivery. It does not help the server to get started toward the net; on the contrary, it retards his effort to get in motion, throwing the weight over from the right foot to the left so that it is necessary to check this cross motion of the weight before the player can start forward.

How the American Service Is Made

The American twist service is a combination of the forehand drop stroke, played overhead, and a side twist. The ball is struck a glancing blow from the racket behind the head, while it is still travelling upward. The racket is kept in contact with the ball even longer than in the drop stroke off the ground, and the strings wiped across its surface rapidly. It is hit on the near edge of the stringing and the contact is kept up as the racket rubs across the ball and starts its revolving spin, the ball leaving the racket at the other edge of the racket. In some cases, where the twist is severe, the ball rubs on the strings for no less than

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R. Lindley Murray's American Service.

By many, Murray is considered the most brilliant of all servers, some good authorities placing him ahead of McLoughlin, Williams and Brookes. The end of his swing that gives the break to the ball is more extreme than any of the others, and he is very fast at getting started for the net.

Champion Williams Serving American Twist.

Williams serves with less extreme effort than McLoughlin, but his delivery is not so reliable. At its best, it is very effective because of its high deep bound and speed, although it has not the spin or the break of the Californian's.

six or eight inches across the racket, and I have often seen it strike the wood of Ward's racket in leaving.

Rapid Spin Makes Ball Drop

The upward and forward motion of the racket, with its face bent well over the ball to give it a glancing blow, imparts a very rapid forward spin as in the drop stroke off the ground, and this rotation, as will be shown in the chapter on twists, creates a much greater friction on the top of the ball than its lower side, with the result that the dropping curve of its normal flight is much accentuated, far beyond what ordinary gravity would cause. This curve is so pronounced that the service can be delivered with great speed and still come inside the court.

Another Curve to Contend With

But this is not the only motion that the ball receives in this delivery. From the illustrations of the twist service it will be apparent that it would be impossible for the right arm to strike the ball an upward glancing blow from behind and below, follow over it and end there. After the arm reaches its maximum height, the finish of the stroke is made by carrying the racket out to the right and then sharply downward at the end of the service. The outward side motion gives the ball a second spin or perhaps alters the first, so that it rotates diagonally on its own axis as it travels through the air. It revolves forward, curving downward, and to the right which makes it bend sharply to the (server's) left as it flies through the air.

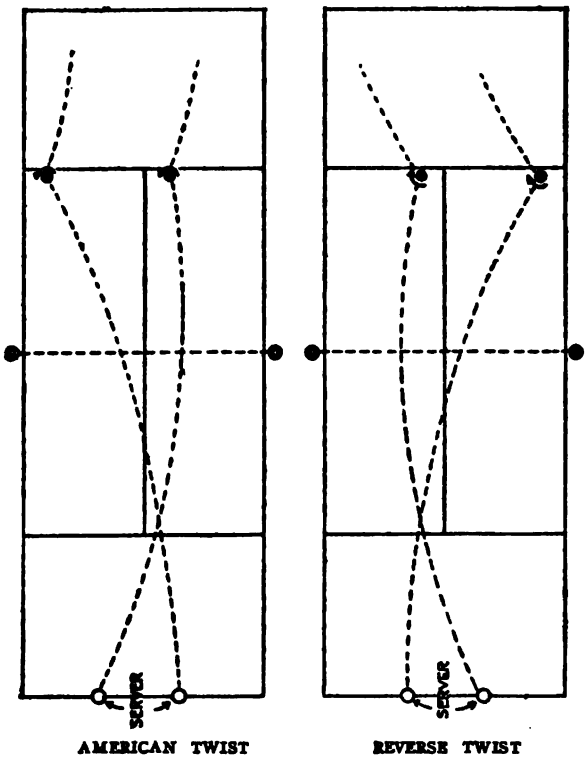
Break Worse to Handle Than the Curve

Now the striker has two motions to anticipate as he tries to solve the flight of these twist

How the Ball Bends in the Air

services, the amount of unnatural drop on the ball and the outward side curve that alters its normal direction. It swings out to his right or away from his forehand, but if he is familiar with the delivery, he will not follow it far, since there is still another feature of this service to contend

Diagrams Show the Curves of the Ball



with in the unnatural bound, or "break" from the ground. The side spin that makes the ball bend in going through the air has a different effect when it strikes the ground.

Side Spin Makes the Erratic Bound

Spinning sharply from right to left, the ball's rotation is the same as that of a billiard ball with

right English, and when it strikes the ground it has the same effect on the sphere as the English has when the billiard ball strikes the cushion of the table. The spinning motion drags it sharply out of the line of its flight, in the direction of the spin, or to the striker's left and the server's right. This gives it an unnatural bound at a sharp angle from its flight, and a curve that brings it in toward the striker's body and somewhat offsets the curve of its flight through the air.

Like the "English" of Billiards

The greatest power in the attack of the American service lies in the hidden ability to vary the amount of twist that the ball receives with the most delicate adjustment of the wrist during the stroke. By easing up slightly on the pressure as the racket shifts from the upward to the side motion, the ball can be allowed to leave the strings before the side motion is accentuated, and then it will bound very much less out of its natural course, if at all. By delaying contact with the ball until the racket has reached its maximum height, so the upward and forward spin is not given, the service can be turned with little perceptible change in the swing into a fast overhead delivery that will bend very little out of its course, and bound almost true, jumping away from the striker so fast as to score an ace if he has been deceived into expecting a twist delivery.

Easing Up in the Swing Changes Effect

McLoughlin often scores aces by this variation of the service and he keeps his antagonists constantly on the anxious seat to discover whether the delivery they must handle has much or little top-spin, side-twist and break. With such varia-

McLoughlin Clever at This Change

tions the service is doubly dangerous, but if served always with the same amount of spin, the striker soon becomes accustomed to its eccentricities and allows for the curve and bound, so that he is able to hit it as well as a straight service, and it is necessarily slower.

Long, Deep Bound an Advantage

One feature of the twist service adds to its strength, and this is the long, deep bound that the over-twist gives. Its tendency is to give a high bound that forces the striker well out of court in order to give the ball room. It is spinning so rapidly even after it leaves the ground that it is a difficult ball to play while rising, although some players have succeeded in returning it this way, from the top of the bound well over the shoulder, and thus get the advantage of being able to drive it downward over the net in return.

Better to Let Ball Spin Itself Out

However, most players will find it better to let this difficult service spin itself out to the end of its bound, and while this drives the striker further from the net, to be sure, it lessens the danger of putting it out of court because of the spinning motion which is then nearly lost, and it also gives more time to guage the flight and angle.

Action Reversed by a Left-Handed Player

Played by a left-handed man, the action of the twist service, so far as the striker is concerned, is of course just reversed, the ball curving to the (server's) right and breaking to his left. Dwight Davis used the service at the same time that Ward did, and when they played doubles together both variations were offered to their antagonists, since Davis is a left-handed player.

Same Effects in the Reverse Twists

The same effect as regards curve in the air and break from the ground appears in the reverse twist service, as originally served by Malcolm Whitman and as served now by Thomas Bundy. However, this variety is never so dangerous as the other, because it is served with the racket in front of the body, the motion of the racket crossing in front of the face from right to left upward, which gives the opposite spin to the ball from the regular "American" service.

Cross Motion Checks Speed

But this motion gives no such speed as the other service, as the weight of the body cannot be used to help it as in the other delivery. The ball travels slower and bounds shorter, but a trifle more sharply to the side, as the forward motion that must be overcome is less.

Length of Great Value in All Services

Length is of great value in all services, particularly when the server is running up to the net. It keeps the striker further away from the volleyer, it makes his stroke therefore a longer one and more difficult to make, it gives the volleyer more time to get into position to play, and after he is there more time to anticipate the return of his antagonist. The short service, particularly when it has a high bound, is simply an encouragement to being passed. However, there have been some short services that have succeeded. Harold Hackett's is not always deep, but he places it with wonderful accuracy and succeeds in keeping down the bound so that it is very difficult to get an aggressive return from it.

Short Service Must Have a Low Bound

Another short service that was very deceptive was that used by Dr. Eaves, the English ex-

pert who was in America some years ago. Eaves used a very sharp out-twist that kept the bound low and he placed his service well to the sides of the court so that it was difficult to pass him.

Risk Double Fault Rather Than Weak Second

I have already spoken of the dangers of a weak second service, and this fault cannot be enlarged upon too much. It is better to risk a double fault than to offer so weak a second delivery that it is easily killed by the opponent. Williams hazards much on a fast second service and probably gains more than he loses by it despite the large number of double faults made in some of his matches.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Does the American twist service pay the average player?

Does American Twist Pay Average Player?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.
T. C. BUNDY: If severe, yes.
K. H. BEHR: Net player only.
F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.
R. D. LITTLE: No.
H. H. HACKETT: I think so.
B. C. WRIGHT: No.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: On the whole, yes.
R. L. MURRAY: Yes, it does.

Church Thinks It Does Not

G. M. CHURCH: I don't think so, especially if a man is ambitious to rise to the top rank, he should develop as fast a service as possible with just enough twist to insure steadiness. If he does not intend to enter tournaments and his opponents are going to be men of no great experience, the American twist service will be a big asset to his game.

W. M. WASHBURN: I don't think so.
ELIA FOTTRELL: No, second ball too easy to hit.
CLARENCE HOBART: Hardly now. Good when it was novel.
E. B. DEWHURST: No.
J. R. STRACHAN: Yes.
C. R. GARDNER: Not the average, perhaps.
A. S. DABNEY: Yes.
F. C. INMAN: No.
W. F. JOHNSON: No.

Niles Thinks Fast Top Service Better

N. W. NILES: Probably yes, but not a good player. For its "break," consistency and speed, a fast top service like Williams's is better.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

Reverse Better for Left-Handed Player

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, unless he is a left-hander, in which case he should cultivate the double twist (like Whitman's, Clothier's and Bundy's) only.

A. M. SQUAIR: No.

G. F. TOUCHARD: No.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: Not for the twist he gets, merely for the control.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes, if he can stand the strain.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Not unless it is mastered.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: No.

Would the game be improved by allowing only one service in singles? In doubles?

Should Second Service Be Omitted?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No. No. No.

T. C. BUNDY: Not in either.

K. H. BEHR: (1) No. (2) Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Do not believe so. Such a radical change would mean an entire reversal of lawn tennis tactics.

R. D. LITTLE: Yes.

H. H. HACKETT: No. No.

B. C. WRIGHT: I am in favor of but one service, only for big match play, however.

J. C. PARKE: No. If umpires would enforce the present foot-fault rule by penalizing all doubtful services (as per instructions of our L. T. A.) it would be a sufficient handicap upon the server.

C. P. DIXON: On this point I am not convinced. Should say it would not improve singles play to allow only one service, but am rather in favor of allowing only one

service in doubles as the service in doubles plays by far too important a role. The percentage of service games won in doubles must be very high.

Most Players Oppose Such a Change

R. L. MURRAY: No, it would not in either singles or doubles. Skill in serving ought to be worth something.

G. M. CHURCH: I don't think either game would be improved by allowing only one service.

W. M. WASHBURN: There seems to be no necessity for such a radical change in the game at present.

ELIA FOTTRELL: No. No.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes, in both. If every one served like McLoughlin, the game would be ruined.

E. B. DEWHURST: No. I have advocated the shortening of the service court, say one foot, so that the service may not become the whole game and so spoil every other part of it.

Dewhurst Has Another Suggestion

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

C. R. GARDNER: Possibly, but I think not.

A. S. DABNEY: In singles, no. In doubles, perhaps, but I doubt it. This could make an argument.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I do not think so in either.

F. C. INMAN: No.

W. F. JOHNSON: No.

N. W. NILES: I believe it would in both cases. Have never tried or seen it tried out, however.

T. R. PELL: I think it would be a great mistake to allow only one service in either.

ROBERT LEROY: No. The brilliant services which are being developed yearly add to the interest of the game and the delight of the spectators. It is up to the players to develop equally brilliant defences to offset the services.

Brilliant Services Add Interest to the Game

A. M. SQUAIR: I think not.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Not in my opinion.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Not in either.

W. M. HALL: No, it would change it completely in my opinion. Would probably necessitate enlarging service court.

RICHARD HARTE: *No. No.*
DEAN MATHEY: I do not think so.
R. C. SEAVER: No.
G. C. SHAFER: Two serves best in both.
S. H. VOSHELL: No, in either case.
E. H. WHITNEY: (1) No. (2) No.
I. C. WRIGHT: No.

Grant Thinks Change Would Be Wise

W. C. GRANT: Yes, in both cases. The server has too much advantage as the rule now stands.

XI

THE FIRST RETURN

FOUR CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*From a service to the far edge of the court, the pass up the line is generally best.*

2—*If the server hangs back, cross-court passes have more room to get past in front of him.*

3—*When no passing shot seems profitable, lob if opponent comes in close, or drive at his feet if he hangs back.*

4—*In doubles, drive across the lowest part of the net in the centre, or lob; do not drive at the net man.*

First Return Closely Restricted by Rules

THERE is one and only one stroke in the game that is restricted to be played off the ground, and that is the first return. Not only that, but the position of the striker-out is more confined and the difficulty of his stroke greater than any other the player must negotiate. For these reasons, it is as well, perhaps, to consider the first return as a play in itself and treat it separately from the other ground-strokes of the game.

The difficulty of the striker-out has been greatly increased of recent years by the steady development of the American twist services,

Difficulty Increased by New Services

whose powerful attack has embarrassed him until he is now conservatively believed to be twenty per cent. weaker than his adversary in the first duel. After the ball has been brought into general play, the striker can regain an even footing with the other man only by dislodging him from the net (if his adversary is a volleyer and has followed up his service) or by passing him.

Four Plays Open When Server Runs In

In considering the best handling of the service, it is necessary to examine the matter in two different lights; first, when the server runs up to the net, and second, when he does not. Against the volleyer, who is fast on his feet and well settled in position to handle the first return, the striker has four plays open to him. He can pass down the line, he can pass across the court, he can lob over the server's head to drive him back, or he can drive toward the adversary with a low dropping stroke that is kept close to the net or drops soon after crossing it so that it leaves no chance for a killing volley.

Pass Down Right Line Easiest

The pass down the line is always easier (for a right-handed player) in the right court, where his forehand can be brought into the play. If the service is directed toward the edge of the court, this stroke will generally offer the best chance, for the cross-court pass is then more difficult and the line more open for attack. For a player like Larned or Pell, with a fine control of the backhand ground-stroke, the line pass is also open in the left court when the service comes toward the side.

But when the server works on the centre

theory, or without that plan of action, keeps his service well centred, the line pass is not open for a fast ball, and is more difficult for a slow ball.

From the Centre, a Dropping Ball the Best

From the centre of the court, the dropping ball is often the best attack against a good smasher to whom it is dangerous to lob. The cross-court shot can be played slow from the centre to either side, but the striker is always in trouble against a fast server who centres his service and closes the alleys to attack by passing up the side-lines.

Short Cross-Court Pass Is Useful

Occasionally, a short cross-court pass will be found very useful from the outside edge across in front of the server as he runs up to volley. From the far side of the court, this allows a sharper angle and more speed because of the greater distance the ball must travel, and while difficult to execute, it is a most valuable attack for occasional use. This shot should not be played often because it will give the server an easy chance to kill if he is able to anticipate it and lean toward the cross-court position to intercept it. Your own position at the side of the court will make it impossible for you to defend against his volley and the court will be open to him; such a shot must win outright or not at all.

Valuable as a Surprise

But another side of this stroke is its value as a surprise and to keep the volleyer in the centre of the court. If the cross-court return of the service is never used, an experienced server will find it easy to direct his attack to the far edge of your service court and lean toward the same side to intercept your attempts at passing along

Brings Volleyer Back to Centre of Court

the side lines. Then it is that the cross-court shot is most valuable, and one or two successes with this stroke will bring him back to his correct position and give you an even chance once more for the line pass, unless he centres his service.

Failing to find the necessary opening for any passing shot, a dropping ball down the centre of the court will make the volleyer block the ball upward again over the net, if you succeed in making it low enough and drop quickly enough for the purpose. Your second shot may offer a better chance for a winning pass and often does. At least it brings the striker back nearer on even terms with the server if the latter does not make a very aggressive stroke from such a return of his service.

Beals Wright Best at the Dropping Attack

Beals Wright was unquestionably the best player ever developed at this particular shot and he was very successful in dropping the ball with a slow chop-stroke from the service, particularly from a high-bounding service, that came very close to putting the volleyer on the defensive. When the server came forward to reach this "fade-away" return before it got too low for an aggressive volley, Wright would lob over his head and he won many aces in this fashion. It is more difficult to play a top-spinning ball with a slow stroke, but it can be done, particularly when the bound is high, and the top-spin will make such a return much more difficult for the opposing volleyer to handle than if it is played with a chop or under-cut.

The lob is often a good answer to a difficult

service, and varied with passing strokes or drop strokes at the feet of the server, it is doubly valuable. To lob regularly to a server is to court destruction, for he will soon be able to anticipate the shot and then only the deepest and straightest dropping balls will not be killed and even they are likely to be volleyed back so deep as to drive you out of court to handle them.

The Lob Is Often a Good Attack

But worked in occasionally with the other variations, the lobbing return has a tendency to keep the server from coming in close, which opens up his feet in turn for the dropping attack. Particularly is this valuable from the extreme left of the left service court, where the backhand is attacked, and the server is running up diagonally to meet the return. A lob diagonally to his backhand corner then will be very difficult for him to reach, and may make him turn and give you the attack.

Keeps the Server from Creeping Up Close

Lobbing the service is generally better toward the end of a hard match, rather than at the start when the adversary is fresh and strong. When he begins to show signs of fatigue, particularly if you are stronger than he at the end, a lobbing attack generally wins good results. Perhaps the most dangerous lob of all for the server is one that is made with the same motion used in playing a passing stroke. It is quite possible to swing the arm forward as though to drive the ball, and turn it at the last instant and lob with the face of the racket bevelled back. The server is almost certain to lunge forward, if this stroke is concealed well, in order to volley the next stroke,

Lobbing Better at End of a Match

and he will then be caught off his balance for a probable ace.

Williams Plays the Ball as It Rises

The problem of handling the service aggressively has been studied from many angles, and it is still possible that some better methods of making the first return may be developed that will make unnecessary any change in the rules to restrict the server's present advantage. Champion Williams and a few others have a method of their own for this which deserves serious consideration. Williams believes that the proper answer to the fast twist services is to stand in close to them and take the ball as it rises. This, he contends, will not only bring the striker closer to the attacking position, but it will gain time and often catches the server before he gets settled at the net.

Is This Style Practicable?

Theoretically, there is no doubt that this is sound, but is it practicable? That is the question. Williams himself uses this style with considerable success and Brookes also has a tendency to play the ball as it rises. In the hands of a master with the skill of a Brookes or a Williams, there is no doubt that such an attack on the server can often be made very powerful, but it depends for its success on a wonderfully quick co-ordination of eye, brain and arm and fast footwork.

Timing Must Be Perfect for Success

The slightest miscalculation of distance or time ruins the stroke. We had an example of that last year in the internationals when Williams made such a poor showing against both Brookes and Wilding. At all times in both matches, I thought he was too close in to receive the service, and the ball was allowed to shoot in against this

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DEAN MATHEY

The English Style of Volleying With Elbow Low.

Note the bent wrist that brings the racket's head well above the forearm. This stroke is unusual among American players, but is more effective than the same method used for ground-strokes. Compare with pictures of Behr and Murray volleying.

OSCAR KREUTZER

R. LINDLEY MURRAY

Two Endings for the Backhand Stroke.

These two pictures contrast strongly the English and American finishes for the backhand stroke. Note that Kreutzer's racket finishes much lower than Murray's, checking his weight enough to raise the left foot. Murray is bent well forward after the ball. Note the different uses of the thumb also, the German's resting diagonally and Murray's straight along the handle.

faulty position, when he could have met it with more power if he had stood further back. But Williams told me that his error in these matches was not that he was too close, but that from this close position he did not step still further in to meet the ball as it came up from the ground.

Champion's Fault in the Internationals

This new development, this tendency to lean toward half-volleying in order to save time, may be the coming development in the game. I am not prepared to say that it will not, but I doubt very much if such a play will ever be practicable for the average tournament player. Even among the most expert players, I believe it will fail in the hands of two men for every one who succeeds with it.

The great danger of standing in close to play the ball as it is rising, comes from the chance of a clever server on the other side watching your position and placing the service either out of reach or in such position as to make the return more difficult than if it were given a full bound, and time were allowed to take a full swing and to gauge the flight properly.

Danger of Standing In Close

Should this style ever come into general use even by the best tournament players, I have no doubt that an improvement in placing the service would soon follow, and to prevent being aced the striker be forced back again into giving the ball more room by the accuracy of placed services which could not be handled on the rise from close in. This play allows only a short backswing, or with a server who places well, only a half swing, and this also handicaps the power of the return.

New Services Might Stop Such Play

McLoughlin Points Out Disadvantages

McLoughlin sums up the disadvantages of this play well in his new book, as follows: "Brookes and Williams are the two great players who by preference play a rising ball, that is, a ball that has not reached the height of its bound—a method I emphatically do not advocate for the average player. To attain such accuracy as that of Brookes or Williams in this respect requires not only a marvellously true eye, but bespeaks long years of faithful practice. The player who strokes the ball on its rise has no time for deliberation. Accuracy must become a matter of second nature, but when once achieved it gives him a tremendous advantage over his opponent. He is enabled to return a service before his rival can get to the net; consequently, he catches the server midway of the court and at a disadvantage."

Collins Used This Style in Doubles

In doubles, Kriegh Collins used this style for his first return, stroking the ball with a top-spin before it reached the top of its bound, and he earned considerable success with it. But Collins was constantly drawn too close in while making this stroke and was often passed by the server on his first volley as a result of his bad position. Then too, he did not have to meet the terrific twist services that now threaten the striker.

In Doubles, First Return Depends on "Formation"

The first return is quite as important in doubles as singles, if not more so, and it is often governed by the "formation" of the serving side. The problems that confront the striker under such conditions will be analyzed in the chapter on doubles. With the normal conditions on the other

side of the net, however, the first return in doubles is almost invariably a cross-court drive or a lob over the net man's head. Occasionally it may be better to lob over the server as he runs in, but to drive at the net man is suicidal.

First Drive Must Be Low and Cross-Court

For this first cross-court drive, the chief requisite is that it must be low and drop as quickly as possible. The net is lowest in the centre and this favors a cross-court shot. Speed is of less value than low trajectory, as is shown by Hackett's ability at this play. Without speed, Hackett makes more of his first return than any other player I know, by keeping his shot always within a foot and generally within six inches of the net, and dropping it before the server can volley it back at his feet.

Sharp Top-Spin Makes Ball "Duck"

The ball with an exaggerated top-spin, however, is very valuable for this first return in doubles, for it "ducks" quickly from its twist and is more difficult to volley. Alexander's forehand drive is particularly effective for this stroke, and it was the combination of this with Hackett's clever first return, more than any other feature of their play, that made this pair the leading team of the country and kept them so long in the championship position.

Pass in Front of Servers Who Hang Back

There is some little latitude—or should I say longitude?—in the angle of placing this first cross-court drive. With a server who is inclined to hang back for fear of lobbing or who naturally assumes a deep position for volleying, a short angle can often be found for an ace across in front of him. On the other hand, the server who

comes in very close almost invariably leaves a hole between himself and his partner that can be used by the striker for a fast drive down the centre of the court.

Lob Valuable in Doubles

Except when the opponents are exceptionally strong in smashing, the lob is always a good return of the service in doubles, being more valuable than in singles for this play. With a server who comes in so fast he cannot back up his partner, a lob over the net man's head is frequently a winning shot, or at least one that will turn the attack against them. Against the American formation the lob is especially valuable because the diagonal path of the server in running to the net brings him there a trifle later and makes it more difficult for him to get back for a lob. Over the net man's head, in this case, will give a diagonal ball that will be hard for either man to reach. Dewhurst believes that this play will break up the American formation when well directed.

XII.

THE TWIST ON THE BALL

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Nearly every tennis ball carries more or less twist, as few can be hit without it.*

2—*Every spinning ball is depressed in its flight, by the greater friction of the air, away from the side that is twisting forward.*

3—*The ball curves in the opposite direction that the racket travelled when it hit the ball.*

4—*When it bounds, the break will be in the same direction the racket took.*

5—*Top-spin makes the ball drop and under-cut keeps it up longer by offsetting gravity.*

Few Realise Importance of Twist

FEW LAWN TENNIS players realize how important is the part that is played by the spinning of the ball in its flight. Even so good a player and writer as Dr. Dewhurst speaks repeatedly of a drive without twist, and others refer to balls hit in such a way.

Now, as a matter of fact, it is next to impossible to hit a tennis ball with absolutely no twist. The roughness of the felt cover which clings so closely to the resilient strings of the racket, makes the ball revolve from the slightest side motion of the racket as the blow is delivered.

Almost Impossible to Hit Ball Without It

A perfectly straight-hit ball, which is intended to have no twist, will carry out this plan of action only if the swing of the racket, during the entire time it is in contact with the ball, is absolutely parallel with its flight, and this is next to impossible for the most expert player to accomplish, even had he so intended.

Even the Earth Revolves on Its Own Axis

But this would not only be difficult but a distinct drawback, since a spherical body without twist travels through the air less accurately than one which is rotating on its own axis. This principle is as old as the hills. Scientists tell us that the largest of all spherical bodies we have to do with, the earth, could not maintain its true course through the heavens if it did not have its own revolving motion that gives us our day and night.

Applied to smaller bodies, it has been clearly shown that a smooth bore cannon cannot fire as far or as accurately as one with the rifling that makes its shot revolve on its own axis. The rifling was put there for that purpose, and the results have proved its success. Your golf ball, your baseball, your cricket ball and the spheroid in practically every other sport follows the same rule.

Some Twist Necessary in Tennis

So we find that some twist at least is necessary in all tennis strokes, both because it cannot be avoided and because it is advantageous anyway. Then how much and what kind of twist is most desirable? Ah, that is a more difficult question to answer. Vaile wrote a whole volume on "Swerve," as he called the unnatural action of balls in cricket, lawn tennis and golf when spinning through the air, and in this he served the cause of lawn tennis

better than in most of his other theories on the game. But he did not answer the difficult questions even then, his work being more scientific than practical.

More Air Resistance on Side Moving Forward

A spherical body rotating on its own axis encounters more resistance in the air on the side that is moving forward than on its other side, and in seeking the line of least resistance it is depressed slightly away from that direction. That is the underlying principle on which is based the whole theory of twist strokes.

Old Carriage Wheel Problem Again

It is the old question of the carriage-wheel over again. The top of a carriage-wheel moves faster (in relation to things standing still) than does the bottom because the forward motion of the centre or axle increases the motion of the top and decreases the motion of the bottom. Similarly the forward motion of a flying ball increases the movement of the side that is revolving forward and decreases the motion of the opposite side.

Theory of Rotation

In the theory of rotation, the maximum curve will be reached in a ball whose rotation is exactly equal to its forward motion. The back-spinning side will encounter more or less friction according to how much its speed around its own axis is greater or less than its forward progression. In a ball that revolves very rapidly, the back-spinning side meets some friction which offsets the pressure from the opposite side, while a slow spinning ball has a similar effect except that the pressure on the back-spinning side is from the front instead of the back. Where the speed of revolu-

tion and progression is exactly equal the swerve or bend in the air will reach the maximum possible.

Baseball First Game to Curve the Ball

The first practical demonstration of the possibilities of the twist appeared in baseball. Here the pitcher has learned to curve the ball with marvelous skill. Thrown from the hand, it is made to spin in the air and curve at will in one direction or another to deceive the batter. Right and left curves have been followed by drop curves and "upshoots" which seemed to defy the laws of gravitation.

Rough Tennis Ball Curves Easier

Now a baseball has a smooth horsehide cover and weighs several times what a tennis ball does. The latter is covered with rough felt that offers more resistance to the air in its flight, and its weight of only two ounces makes it particularly susceptible to curves in the air. But the contact of the racket's strings with the surface of the ball offers no such fine control as a pitcher's grip on it. Nevertheless, tennis players have developed many curves that have added variations to the game that have not been yet exhausted.

Lawford Used a Sharp Twist

The first use of this twist of the ball appeared in the Lawford stroke originally used by one of the earliest English masters of the game, who struck the ball with such a sharp upglancing blow that it took on a rapid forward spin which made it "duck" in an unnatural way soon after crossing the net. This stroke in a modified form still remains as one of the most useful drives we have in the modern game of to-day, and it is fully described in a previous chapter on the forehand strokes.

Under-Cut Ball Carries Rapid Spin

The forward spinning ball has been matched by its reverse, the under-cut stroke, with sharp backspin that gives the opposite effect to the flight of the ball. Struck in this way, the greater resistance underneath the ball in its spinning works against the natural gravitation and the ball sails longer in the air, flying nearer horizontally than if hit without twist, and finally dying with a lifeless swoop at the end of its flight when gravitation has overcome the spin.

Hit with the same power and the same trajectory, a ball will fly about twenty per cent. further before touching the ground if under-cut than if played with sharp top-spin.

Right and Left Side Twists Also

But these are only the simplest uses of the spinning ball in tennis. Right and left twists come next and then all the variations and combinations of the two. Finally, we come to the effect of the rotating motion on the bound of the ball after its eccentric flight has ended, and here we encounter the well-known principles that are involved in billiards, where the spinning ball gets an unnatural rebound from the cushions.

Glancing Blow Makes Ball Revolve

To make the tennis ball revolve on its own axis, the racket strikes a glancing blow, the strings brushing or wiping across its rough surface with a gripping contact that gives a rapid spin. The rougher the stringing of the racket, the more complete will be its grip on the ball, and the longer the racket is kept in contact with it, the more fully will it be able to transfer its motion.

In the early days of the game, when the cut strokes of court tennis were in use, many devices

Rough Stringing Tried to Increase Twist

were tried to increase the cut or spin. Knotted stringing in the rackets and double weaves of the catgut were experimented with, but finally the manufacturers settled on the present method as the best. Lop-sided heads were used first; then some bright mind thought the lop could be used on both sides and a racket that was almost triangular followed. One extremely wide abortion was created on the theory that the wider the racket the more twist could be secured, but it was finally discovered that the ball held contact with the strings for such a short time that extra width could not increase the rubbing surface.

Loose Strings Increase Spin

The looser the strings are in a racket the longer can the contact be maintained, and tight, highly-resilient, thin strings tend to lessen the ability to twist the ball. Other than cut strokes, however, are made better with tight stringing.

Drop-Stroke Like Billiard Follow-Shot

The lift, or drop-stroke, with its straight top-spin, simply imparts with an upward drag of the racket as it strikes the ball, a forward rotation like a follow shot in billiards, with the axis of the spin parallel with the ground. The greatest friction is on the top side of the ball in consequence, and this friction, added to gravitation, makes it drop unnaturally from its original line of flight when the first force of its forward movement is spent.

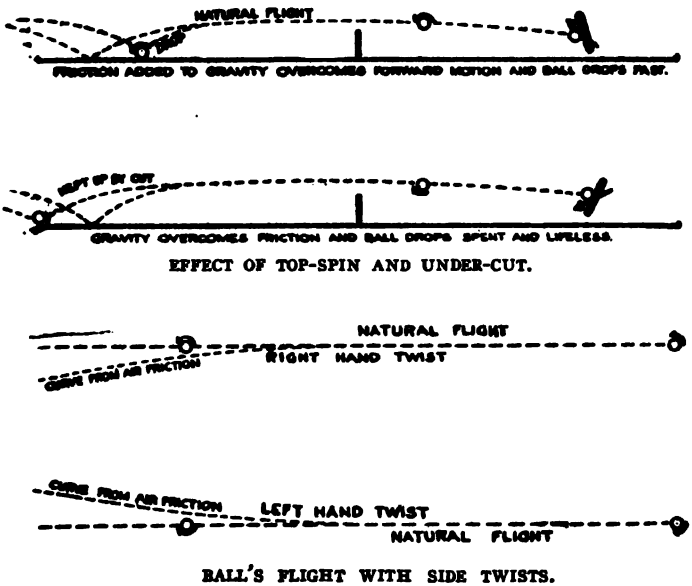
Spin Drags Ball Forward from Bound

When this ball strikes the ground, its spinning motion drags it ahead with a sudden shoot that depresses the height of its ordinary bound. The spin continues with it although dying rapidly, and it is inclined to shoot upward from the racket

when you try to return it. At the net, when the top-spinning ball is encountered, it is especially difficult to volley because of its tendency to dip just about the time it reaches the volleying position, and also because of its rotation.

Difficult to Volley Top-Spinning Ball

This spin makes the ball jump upward from the racket, and slows up the return unless the volleyer understands the proper way to handle it,


NATURAL FLIGHT
FRICTION ADDED TO GRAVITY OVERCOMES FORWARD MOTION AND BALL DROPS FAST.
GRAVITY OVERCOMES FRICTION AND BALL DROPS SPENT AND LIFELESS.
EFFECT OF TOP-SPIN AND UNDER-CUT.
NATURAL FLIGHT
RIGHT HAND TWIST
CURVE FROM AIR FRICTION
CURVE FROM AIR FRICTION
LEFT HAND TWIST
NATURAL FLIGHT
BALL'S FLIGHT WITH SIDE TWISTS.

Diagrams Show Effect of Twists on Flight

which is to bevel the racket slightly backward and to strike a slightly glancing blow downward to overcome the spin.

Under-Cut Ball Reverse of Drop-Stroke

The under-cut ball, with its back-spin, is just the reverse of the drop-stroke, and it receives its rotation from a downward glancing blow from the racket, or a down drag while the strings are still

Spin Resists Gravitation

in contact with the ball. The effect of this twist is to produce greater friction on the bottom of the ball, and this resists gravitation until the forward power of the ball is spent and then the ball drops spent and lifeless to the ground.

Mean Bound from Chop-Stroke

The bound from the under-cut ball is more of an awkward kick than a true bound, and it jumps up with some of its back-spin still in operation to bother the player who has to return it. The bound is low and the spin makes it necessary to get well under the ball and lift it slightly higher to clear the net than a similar ball without spin, for the rotation has a tendency to make it carrom down toward the earth again from the racket.

Vertical Twist Can Also Be Used

Vertical twist can be put on a tennis ball from either the right or left side, but, except in the service which is hit with a glancing blow overhead, it is difficult to make a driving stroke at the ball with any angle that permits vertical rotation. The axis of the spin on the ball, however, can be nearly vertical in some ground strokes, and the ball will bend to one side or the other from this twist according to which way it is spinning.

Rule That Governs Curves and Breaks

It is a safe rule to know that a spinning ball will always curve in the *opposite* direction that the racket travelled in hitting it. When it comes to the bound, the ball will break in the *same* direction the racket travelled in hitting it, upward, downward, to the right or left, or diagonally, if the racket's path was diagonal, *at the moment of hitting the ball.*

The racket frequently swings around a con-

siderable part of a circle in making a stroke and it is not always apparent at which part of the swing the ball was hit, but when you find the path of the racket at the time of impact, you can safely calculate that the ball will curve away from this direction and bound toward it.

Watch Path of Racket for Secret

Twist services, with the methods involved in making them, have been fully described in the chapter on service. However, the principles of ball rotation are more closely involved in this stroke than any of the ground strokes, and even at the risk of repeating, the service must be considered here. In this stroke, more than in any other, are the vertical and horizontal twists combined and their effect is very puzzling unless the principles are thoroughly analyzed and understood.

Both Vertical and Horizontal Twists in Service

The ball, being struck with an upward motion of the racket similar to that of the drop-stroke off the ground, has much of the same action, but at the end of the stroke, the racket is dragged diagonally across the line of flight and the ball receives a sharp side twist, which, added to and altering the forward spin already imparted to it, gives a diagonal rotation.

The effect of this altered rotation is to make the ball bend sharply to right or left in the air, according to whether the out-twist or reverse twist is used, and whether the stroke is played by a right-handed or a left-handed player. The action of the ball is just reversed by the same stroke played with the opposite hand, for the path of the racket in hitting it lies in the opposite direction.

Effect of the Altered Rotation

The top spin makes the ball spring for-

Sudden Drop and Sharper Upbound

ward in its bound and the sudden drop gives a different angle of impact with the ground from the normal service and a consequently sharper upbound, while the side-spin makes the ball drag or break sharply off in the direction of its spin.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Do you intentionally put twist on every ball?

Should Every Ball Carry Twist?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.
T. C. BUNDY: Service, yes, reserve twist.
K. H. BEHR: Almost, except a few volleys.
F. B. ALEXANDER: Usually.
R. D. LITTLE: Yes.
H. H. HACKETT: No.
B. C. WRIGHT: On eighty-five per cent.
J. C. PARKE: No.
C. P. DIXON: No.
R. L. MURRAY: Almost.
G. M. CHURCH: Yes, except on pickups.
W. M. WASHBURN: No.
ELIA FOTTRELL: No.
CLARENCE HOBART: No.
E. B. DEWHURST: No.
J. R. STRACHAN: Yes.
C. R. GARDNER: No.

Majority Think Not

A. S. DABNEY: Top-spin on ground strokes. Sometimes cut on volleys, but mostly straight.
G. P. GARDNER, JR.: A slight spin usually.
F. C. INMAN: Only service.
W. F. JOHNSON: Not intentionally, but naturally.
N. W. NILES: On nearly every shot.
T. R. PELL: No.
ROBERT LEROY: No, I do not use a twist and do not think I should care to if I could.
A. M. SQUAIR: On most, but not on all.
G. F. TOUCHARD: No.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.
W. M. HALL: No.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

Second Service Carries Most

DEAN MATHEY: No. Only on my second service for control.

R. C. SEAVER: No.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes, reverse.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

E. H. WHITNEY: No.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: Hardly any on first service; quite a little on second.

Do you consider a ball played without twist to have as much speed or control as a twisting one?

Do Speed and Control Go With the Twist?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I believe more.

T. C. BUNDY: Depends entirely on player.

K. H. BEHR: I doubt it.

F. B. ALEXANDER: More speed, but less control

R. D. LITTLE: No.

H. H. HACKETT: Not as much speed, possibly more control though.

B. C. WRIGHT: The more twist, the less speed. Depends on the player.

J. C. PARKE: More speed, but perhaps less control.

C. P. DIXON: Quite as much speed.

R. L. MURRAY: Less control but more speed.

G. M. CHURCH: No.

Washburn Has Never Seen a Ball Without Twist

W. M. WASHBURN: I have never seen a tennis ball played without twist of some kind.

ELIA FOTTRELL: More speed, less control.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes.

E. B. DEWHURST: More speed and more control.

J. R. STRACHAN: It has more speed but less control.

C. R. GARDNER: More speed and theoretically more control without twist, but for me it is easier to control with top or under-spin.

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THEODORE R. PELL

A Rear View of the American Twist Service.

This shows well the dropping of the racket from the wrist at the end of the back-swing. Pell does not bend his body quite so much as others in this delivery, and he does not get so much twist and curve in the air, nor so much break from the ground.

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Wilding's Style of Service.

Note the low ball and short swing of the racket. Wilding's service was good, but never so dangerous as the American leaders who developed the twist deliveries, nor as that of Brookes, who placed his delivery with great accuracy.

A. S. DABNEY: On volleys, yes. On ground-strokes, top gives more control and speed.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: More speed, less control.

Twist Gives Less Speed, More Control

F. C. INMAN: More speed, less control.

N. W. NILES: As much speed but usually not so accurate. However, so long as the balls remain heavy as on grass, an almost straight shot except in serving is as good if not better.

T. R. PELL: No. More speed, less control.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, it usually has more of both.

A. M. SQUAIR: As much speed, but usually not so much control.

Nearly All Agree on This Point

G. F. TOUCHARD: There is no such thing as a ball without twist. The more on a ball the more its flight is retarded.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: No.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: More speed, less control.

R. C. SEAVER: More speed and more control for nine out of ten players.

G. C. SHAFER: More speed usually, less control.

S. H. VOSHELL: More speed, less control.

E. H. WHITNEY: More speed, but not such good control.

I. C. WRIGHT: Without twist much better.

W. C. GRANT: A moderate top-spin gives more control and better direction.

Do you think a ball with top-spin or under-cut a better attack against a net player? Against a base-liner?

Which Ball Offers Best Attack?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Hardly.

T. C. BUNDY: Top-spin against a net player, about equal against base-liner.

K. H. BEHR: Top-spin vs. net attack, under-cut better vs. base-line, but few can do it.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Top-spin, fifty-fifty.

R. D. LITTLE: Top-spin is better either way.

H. H. HACKETT: I consider top-spin only good in doubles.

B. C. WRIGHT: Top-spin against a net player. Under-cut against base-line, as it hangs low and shoots.

Parke and Dixon Both Favor Top-Spin

J. C. PARKE: Under-cut is never an attack in the proper sense of the word (meaning aggressiveness) but is purely defensive in my opinion.

C. P. DIXON: A ball with top-spin is the best attack against a net player; under-cut would be more efficacious against a base-liner. Some base-liners might relish it.

R. L. MURRAY: Top-spin by far, against both.

G. M. CHURCH: I think a ball with stop-spin is the best attack against every opponent except when you are inside the service-line and your opponent is near the base-line. In this case, I frequently use an under-cut.

W. M. WASHBURN: Top-spin is better against a net player; cut against a base-liner.

ELIA FOTTRELL: (No. 1) Top-spin. (No. 2) Top-spin.

CLARENCE HOBART: (1) Yes. (2) No.

Beals Wright Only Man with Under-Cut Attack

E. B. DEWHURST: Top-spin in both cases. Beals Wright was the only player who did anything with cut, and it was his volley that won.

J. R. STRACHAN: Some players cannot handle a low-bounding ball and in that case an under-cut ball is more effective, while others cannot handle a high one. If the latter be the case, a top-spinning ball is a better shot because the ball would bounce high. I think that the top-spinning ball is the better form of attack against a net player.

C. R. GARDNER: Top-spin (dropping ball) is good against a net attack, and under-cut often breaks up a back-court player.

A. S. DABNEY: Top-spin always. But a good under-cut will bother a pure base-liner exceedingly.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Depends largely on player as a rule. Top-spin for net player and under-cut for base-liner if you can control it.

F. C. INMAN: Top-spin. Faster and as much control against all players.

Most Favor Top-Spin Against Net Player, Under-Cut Against Base-Liner

W. F. JOHNSON: A ball with top-spin is better against a net player and an under-cut against a base-liner.

N. W. NILES: Top-spin is better against a net player. An accurate under-cut shot is better against a back-court "stroke" player. The twist is apt to make the stroke player uncertain.

T. R. PELL: Top-spin against a net player best. Under-cut against a base-liner.

ROBERT LEROY: With top-spin, against a net player. Probably also against a base-liner. As a rule those who can send a good under-cut (like Wallace Johnson) can't go to the net after making it.

A. M. SQUAIR: Top-spin is best usually against both net and base-line players.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Top-spin, except against a base-liner.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Against a net player, top-spin. Against a base-liner, straight ball.

Some Believe Straight Ball Best Against Back-Court Player

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Top-spin against a net player; under-spin against base-line player.

W. M. HALL: Top-spin against net player. Under-cut against base-liner.

RICHARD HARTE: Top-spin in both cases, for the ball can be hit harder, with better placing.

DEAN MATHEY: Top-spin better attack against net player. Under-cut better attack against base-liner.

R. C. SEAVER: It's a harder ball against a net player. Against a base-liner not so effective.

G. C. SHAFER: Top-spin best attack in both cases.

S. H. VOSHELL: Top-spin against both.

Whitney Differs from the Others

E. H. WHITNEY: Against a net player I think the under-cut ball is the best attack, as it is more apt to drop so the opponent has to return it up to you. The under-cut ball is never very effective against a good player. It loses all its speed.

I. C. WRIGHT: Straight, hard, well-placed more important.

W. C. GRANT: A ball with top-spin is more difficult to volley.

While volleying, do you find it easier to volley an under-cut or a top-spinning ball?

Which Ball Is Easier to Volley?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Same.

T. C. BUNDY: Top-spin and under-cut about equal.

K. H. BEHR: I think the latter.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Fifty-fifty.

R. D. LITTLE: Under-cut is easier to volley.

H. H. HACKETT: Top-spin.

B. C. WRIGHT: Under-cut as it hangs to the racket better and usually not dropping.

J. C. PARKE: Under-cut.

C. P. DIXON: Easier to volley an under-cut ball.

R. L. MURRAY: I never noticed.

All Look Alike to Church

G. M. CHURCH: The spin on the ball to be volleyed makes no difference to me; the difficulty in volleying varies directly with the speed of the ball to be volleyed.

W. M. WASHBURN: Under-cut.

ELIA FOTTRELL: An under-cut ball.

E. B. DEWHURST: Under-cut ball easier because of slower flight.

J. R. STRACHAN: An under-cut.

C. R. GARDNER: The under-cut is easier to volley after one learns to hit hard and higher.

Majority Find the Under-Cut Ball Easier

A. S. DABNEY: Under-cut easier.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Under-cut is more unusual and apt to be deceptive at first.

F. C. INMAN: Under-cut, it comes much slower.

W. F. JOHNSON: Under-cut.

N. W. NILES: Easier to volley an under-cut; slower.

T. R. PELL: Under-cut.

A Few Think They Are About Equal

ROBERT LEROY: Much easier to volley an under-cut. All volleyers know this, and that is why some one like Clothier or G. P. Gardner, or even Colston, can win against a remarkable under-cut player like Wallace Johnson.

A. M. SQUAIR: Very little difference.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Under-cut.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: About same.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Under-cut.

W. M. HALL: Under-cut.

RICHARD HARTE: Top-spinning.

DEAN MATHEY: Easier to volley an under-cut because it "floats."

R. C. SEAVER: Am not qualified to make remarks as a volleyer, but I think the under-cut ball easier to volley.

G. C. SHAFER: About the same, but you may have to volley the top-spinning ball lower.

S. H. VOSHELL: Top-spinning.

E. H. WHITNEY: An under-cut is much easier to volley.

I. C. WRIGHT: All look alike to me.

W. C. GRANT: Under-cut.

XIII.

LOBBING

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Lob low to attack and lob high for defence.*

2—*Except to gain time, only lob when the opponent is close up; if he is back in his court, he will be in position to kill it.*

3—*Place your lobs to the backhand corner, and always make them deep. Nothing is worse than a short lob.*

4—*Do not lob all the time; vary the stroke with others, and use it only when needed for defence, or to dislodge a volleyer.*

5—*Lob high and deep when pressed for time either to recover position in court, or to get a breathing spell.*

Legitimate Value of the Lob

THE LOB is a stroke that is too often mistaken for a sign of weakness, and it is only among the better players that its true value is understood and appreciated. The stroke has a position in the scheme of good tennis as definite and respected as any other stroke in the category.

Opposed by a net attack, it is a perfect defence, except against that rare exception to the general average of even strong tournament play-

ers, the man who can smash from his deep court with aggressiveness and accuracy. Among the great majority of players a deep lob is almost a perfect defence. Few can kill more such balls than they miss, and all but the best experts are generally forced to a deep overhead volley that is little more dangerous from that distance than a ground stroke.

A Safe Answer to the Net Attack

Against all such players then, a deep lob is a safe answer to the net attack, and if no opening is presented for a passing stroke when your opponent goes to the net, the lob puts you back at least on even terms with him unless he is a smasher of extraordinary power. If the volleyer hangs back from the net, if he is more than ten or twelve feet away, of course he is open to a dropping horizontal attack at his feet that is even more threatening than a lob.

Also an Attack in Itself in Some Cases

On the other hand, if the volleyer comes in very close to the net, then the lob is not only a perfect defence, but can be turned into a dangerous attack. A clean ace can often be scored on this stroke, if the lob be played low just out of the volleyer's reach, and when caught in close the opponent can often be forced to turn and play the ball from the bound, giving the attacking position over to the other man. Unless played high, the lob will not give such a close net player enough time to back away and volley the ball.

Balance of Power Very Delicate

The balance of power in the lobbing game between the persistent lobber and the persistent smasher is very delicate, and the victory generally goes to the man who is steadiest, no matter which

Tiresome Work, Smashing Lob After Lob

end of the duel he assumes. The player who cannot kill overhead often beats himself through his own errors, even though his opponent does nothing more than lob defensively. It is difficult and tiresome work at best, smashing lob after lob, and unless there is speed and accuracy in these smashes enough to beat the other man quickly, the smasher is likely to wear himself out in such a duel before the lobber and finally lose through exhaustion or unsteadiness.

Lobbing to Make the Other Man Miss

Personally, I have seen scores of men beaten in this way and I have been the victim of many such campaigns. The smasher generally has a little the better of the struggle at first, but overhead play is much more tiring than lobbing, and if the match is drawn out long, he is likely to gradually fade away and the steady lobbying will wear down his attack until his errors far outnumber his aces scored.

Foote Wore Down His Opponents This Way

Arthur Foote, one of the "first ten" players of the land some years ago, used this method of campaign with success for some seasons. He lobbed so accurately and with so little effort that he wore down scores of antagonists and beat them from his own superior steadiness. Always outplayed in ground strokes at the start of the match, his play invariably suffered by contrast, but when the other man's freshness had gone, Foote's steadiness would win for him. More recently, Abraham Bassford, Jr., earned considerable success with similar methods among the second-class players.

In doubles, the same tactics have been suc-

Lob a Dangerous Attack in Doubles

cessfully followed for a long time. In 1895, Clarence Hobart and Fred Hovey held the American championship and were challenged for their title by Robert Wrenn and Malcolm Chace at Newport. The challengers believed that the old holders could not smash lobs, and they started out from the first game to lob everything miles high, with the expected result that the champions gradually faded until at the end of the match they were missing many more lobs than they killed, and the championship changed hands that season in consequence. A little later on, Ward and Davis adopted similar tactics with success. They became so proficient at lobbing and placed their lobs with unerring accuracy so close to the back line that there were few teams which could handle them aggressively.

More Need for It Than in Singles

But in doubles, there is a greater need for lobbing than in singles, since the advantage of the attack arbitrarily given to the servers is so much stronger than in singles, owing to the smaller expanse of net each player has to cover. The chances of the strikers to successfully pass their opponents at the net is much smaller and the lob is more often needed in doubles than in singles.

Can Be Made Very Aggressive

But the lob is a strong weapon of attack, not only negatively, through the weakness or errors of the opponent who is unable to kill it, but as a positive aggressive attack. Against a man in the back of his court, particularly one who does not smash well, it is sometimes possible to lob and run in to take the attacking position at the net

yourself. A weak volley of such a deep lob often affords an opportunity for the lobber to kill the return.

"Irish Lob" Is Often the Best

For this kind of work, the "Irish lob" is the best. This is simply a high deep lob with a little under-cut to give the ball back-spin and make it drop straighter. The higher a ball is lobbed, the straighter and faster it must fall, and speed in the dropping ball as well as the lack of incoming angle increases the difficulty of the smasher.

Net-Rushing Tactics Can Be Stopped

Your net-rushing volleyer who follows up his service each time must keep in mind always the danger to which he is exposed in an overhead attack. If his opponent does not lob at all, he may throw all caution to the winds and dash headlong at the net every time, but if he is given one or two well-timed lobs, the constant menace overhead will affect his net play materially. The whole success of the volleying campaign depends on getting to the net very fast behind the service, and if the server rushes too close or is caught still moving forward a low lob will often score a clean ace.

Keeping the Volleyer Back Opens Fresh Holes

It is not always the actual effect of the lob itself that is most valuable; it is the moral effect on the adversary, who is almost certain after a few successful overhead attacks to come in a trifle slower and a trifle less close to the net for fear of the lob, and this gives his opponent a fresh opening either by dropping the ball close to the net, by side-line passing strokes or short cross-court passes that could not get past in front of the volleyer if he were three feet closer in. Two

or three aces won by lobbing over the head of the net-rusher will sometimes break up his game entirely or weaken his attack so that he can be passed with ease.

A Clean Ace Sometimes Scored by Low Lob

Against the volleyer after he is once safely settled at the net, the lob is still a splendid weapon of attack. The same considerations affect his position, and if he ventures too close, a clean ace can sometimes be scored on a low lob. This anxiety which he must always feel when close in, if a shrewd lobber is opposed to him, makes him keep one foot well behind ready to start backward instantly if necessary to smash a lob, and this position makes it more difficult for him to start quickly from one side of the net to the other to reach passing shots along the lines.

Ware's Skill at Covering the Lob

Covering the lob also adds much to the danger of its attack. Leonard Ware used this clever deception with consummate skill. He could lob with almost exactly the same motion he used for his forehand drive, and with an opponent at the net, he would go through all the motions of trying to pass him, drawing his man forward to anticipate the pass, and then turn the stroke at the last second into a lob that often caught him off his balance for a sure ace. Catching your adversary off his balance in this way with his weight thrown forward when an attacking lob is made delays his effort to get back for it by just enough to make his return defensive if not to make him miss altogether.

The aggressive lob is made doubly dangerous, and the value of a defensive lob increased, if

Selecting the Backhand Corner

the backhand corner of the antagonist's court is selected to place it in. No matter how well an expert may play backhand strokes off the ground, there is not one chance in a thousand that he can volley overhead backhand. H. S. Mahony, one of the old-time British experts, really could use this stroke effectively, but outside of this one player, I never met a man who did not run around such a lob and smash it or volley it over his forehand shoulder. (I do not say right shoulder because this is reversed by left-handed players.) To place a lob in the backhand corner therefore makes it doubly difficult for the other man to get properly under it for the smash or volley. If he should let it drop and play it from the bound, such a position makes him run around the ball and outside of the court in order to get the return on his forehand side for the return. A low lob in the deep backhand corner is a winner every time.

Lobbing to Gain Time

There is also another defensive use of the lob which is very valuable. It is a time-saver useful in two different ways. When forced out of position, particularly when outside the court with an opponent at the net, a lob and preferably a high one, will afford the time to get back into position safely, and if it is played deep, will not give the average opponent any distinct advantage. It is very discouraging to drive your man clear outside of the court by a well-placed forcing stroke that was expected to open the court for a killing shot, and then have him put up a lob that is too deep to be killed. He immediately scampers back into his defensive position in the middle of the court,

and the attack must begin all over again in order to secure an opening for the expected kill.

When Out of Breath, Lob Saves the Day

When hard-pressed for breathing time, the lob is a splendid time-saver, and a perfectly legitimate play. Often in match play a man will find himself temporarily embarrassed either from running too hard from side to side, or from some sudden effort that has left him breathless. A deep lob at this point gives him the few precious seconds needed for one or two slow breaths and then he will be ready for the next thrust without the "bellows-to-mend" feeling that is sure to make him miss his stroke.

At the end of a hard match when exhausted, or sometimes in the middle of a match before you get your "second wind," there sometimes comes a time when some relief is needed or everything is lost, and then your old friend the lob is again the life-saver.

Its Constant Use Will Kill Its Value

But the constant use of the lob in match play is most likely to kill its value. To lob steadily is sure to give the opponent clear warning of what to expect, and he soon becomes so accustomed to handling that stroke that he does not miss the kill so often as you might reasonably expect. He will soon begin to hang back in his court for the lob also if it comes to him regularly; he will get his eye on the ball and his smashing arm in good working order. After that, lobbing will be a losing manoeuver.

Must Keep Your Opponent Guessing

The keynote to successful lobbing rests in keeping your opponent guessing as to when and where the lob is coming to him. If you also at-

Beals Wright's Clever Use of the Lob

tack his feet with short balls, he will fear the lob more because he must come in closer to stop that attack, and if you only lob when you have drawn him in, your lobs will be always more dangerous. As a systematic attack, the stroke is used best as Beals Wright used it, in conjunction with a short dropping stroke at the feet of the opponent that alternately drew his man in and drove him back again, exposing him constantly to a winning attack. Wright used this method with exceptional skill against an opponent at the net, and promptly took the attack into his own hands as soon as he could dislodge him from the volleying position by this kind of play.

The Lob-Volley Is Rarely Used

The lob-volley is simply a lob played with a volleyed stroke, and is rarely used. Occasionally, both players will be drawn in close and one will have the chance to lob a volley over the other's head, but the stroke is difficult to execute and in this position the ball can generally be killed with a passing volley.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS

Do you use the lob as an attacking stroke?

Is the Lob Used to Attack?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I do not much. It is one of my weaknesses.

T. C. BUNDY: Yes.

K. H. BEHR: No, because I can't.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.

R. D. LITTLE: Occasionally.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: When the opportunity offers.

J. C. PARKE: Yes, whenever I use it at all.

C. P. DIXON: Yes, and originally a very effective one.

R. L. MURRAY: No, only as defensive.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

Most Experts Use It, More or Less

W. M. WASHBURN: When my opponent crowds the net.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Sometimes.

CLARENCE HOBART: It is sometimes very satisfactorily so used.

E. B. DEWHURST: Why not?

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

C. R. GARDNER: Seldom.

A. S. DABNEY: No.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Not often.

F. C. INMAN: No.

W. F. JOHNSON: On occasions.

N. W. NILES: At times, yes.

T. R. PELL: Sometimes.

ROBERT LEROY: Very seldom.

A. M. SQUAIR: Sometimes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Quite often.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Sometimes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Sometimes, but seldom.

W. M. HALL: At times.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: Yes.

Seaver Says It Wears the Other Man Out

R. C. SEAVER: A great deal; it wears the other player out more than anything else.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Sometimes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.

I. C. WRIGHT: Defensive only.

W. C. GRANT: Yes, if opponent is close to net.

Do you consider persistent lobbing, to make the opponent lose, good tennis and good sportsmanship?

Is Persistent Lobbing Good Sportsmanship?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Hardly.

T. C. BUNDY: Consider it a very aggressive stroke if done well, and good tennis.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Certainly.

R. D. LITTLE: Certainly.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes. It is difficult to lob consistently and his opponent should be strong at all points.

J. C. PARKE: I would not go so far as to call it bad sportsmanship, but I would certainly call it bad tennis.

Most Players Approve of It

C. P. DIXON: Certainly justifiable in match play to use means which are perfectly legitimate and open to both players.

R. L. MURRAY: Absolutely, unless the sun is hot.

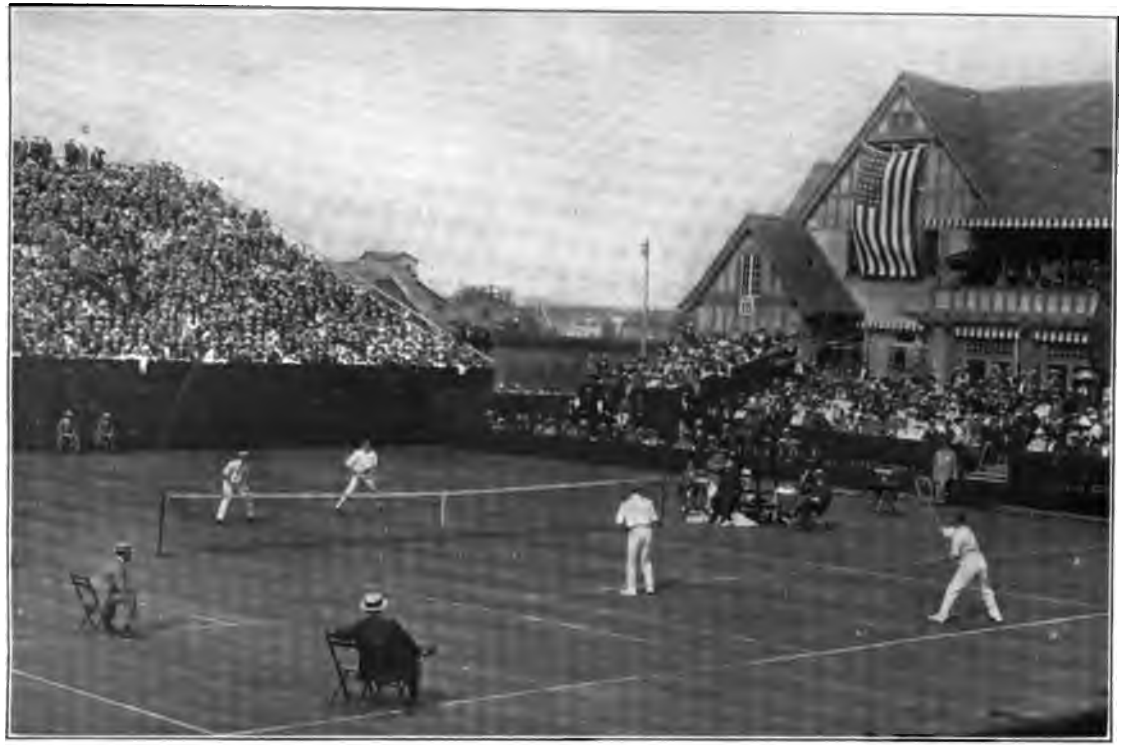
G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes, of course.

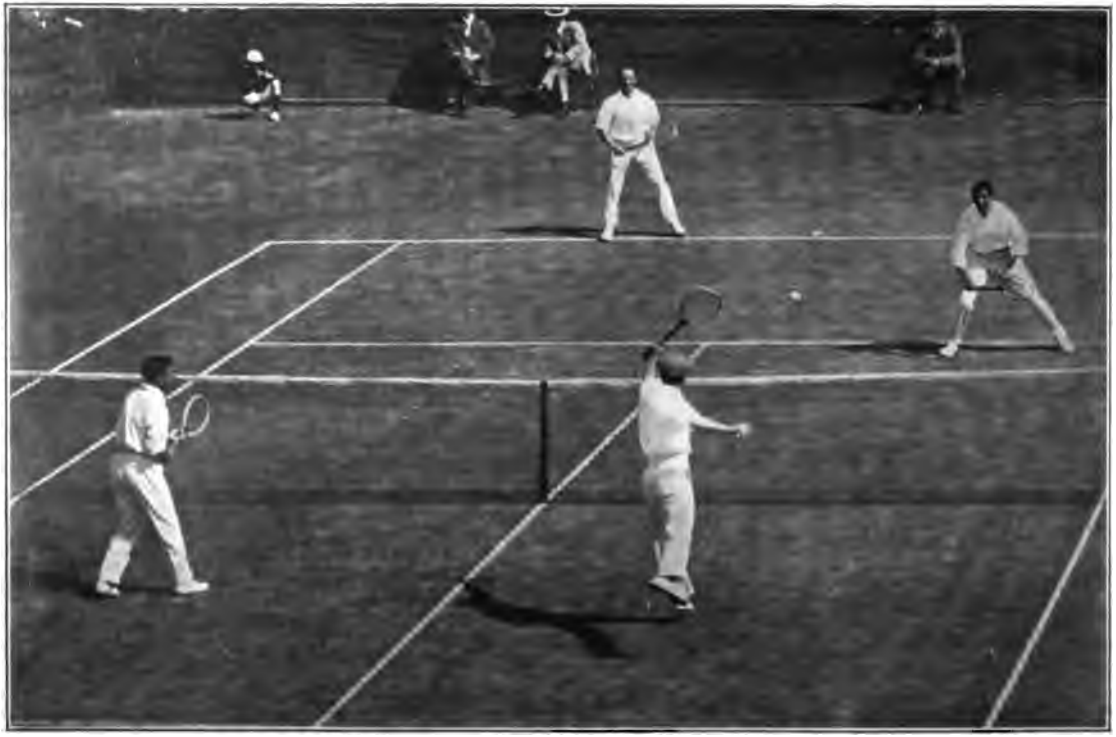
E. B. DEWHURST: Why not? Not good tennis but all right.



BUNDY McLOUGHLIN BROOKES WILDING

English Formation for Doubles.

This view of the International match of 1914 shows Wilding returning Bundy's service, with Brookes at the service-line. Despite this apparent weakness, the Australians won decisively. There is much difference of opinion among experts as to the soundness of this position for the partner of the striker-out.



DUNLOP PARKE BROOKES BEAMISH

English Doubles Against Australians.

This is a view of the International match of 1912 in Melbourne, and shows Parke returning Brookes' service, with Beamish at the service-line. Brookes is about to volley Parke's return, and it would seem easy from his position to score at the feet of Beamish in his position.

J. R. STRACHAN: Yes. I think that persistent lobbing is good sportsmanship. Some players use a lob as others do a drive, that is, as their effective stroke.

Any Stroke of the Game Legitimate

C. R. GARDNER: Personally, I have always preferred not to do this; but I shouldn't consider it bad sportsmanship to beat a man by using *any* stroke in tennis.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes, if it wins it is good judgment and that is part of the game. But if the opponent is always in the back court then it is not tennis. I mean if he never comes to the net.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.

F. C. INMAN: Yes.

W. F. JOHNSON: May be neither, but often necessary to win.

N. W. NILES: Latter, yes. Not particularly good tennis usually, especially in singles.

T. R. PELL: Yes, perfectly fair if you can win by it.

A Few Against It

ROBERT LEROY: Yes.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Certainly.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Yes.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

DEAN MATHEY: Yes.

R. C. SEAVER: Lobbing is part of the game, I think it is good sportsmanship; never thought of it in any other sense.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: No indeed.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes, it is part of the game and a difficult shot.

W. C. GRANT: It is honest tennis and if opponent is weak on overhead strokes, it is part of the game.

Do you intentionally place your lobs to opponent's backhand corner?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.

T. C. BUNDY: Yes.

K. H. BEHR: Yes, when I can, which is seldom.

Do Experts Place Lobs on Backhand?

F. B. ALEXANDER: Not always good policy, generally sound; some men smash better that way than the other; depends on whom I am against.

R. D. LITTLE: It depends on the opponent and his position in the court. Generally, it is safe to lob over opponent's backhand shoulder.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

J. C. PARKE: No.

C. P. DIXON: More perhaps to backhand than to forehand, but much depends on the exact position of your opponent at the time and also the relative strength of opponent on forehand and backhand.

Murray Does Not, but Ought To

R. L. MURRAY: No, but I ought to.

G. M. CHURCH: Not unless my opponent is very slow in covering court.

W. M. WASHBURN: Often, unless I am in such a bad position as to make an attempt to place too dangerous.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Mostly. It always depends on his position in the court.

CLARENCE HOBART: Sometimes.

E. B. DEWHURST: Why not?

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

Majority Favor This Attack

C. R. GARDNER: If he is discomfited thereby, yes.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Usually.

F. C. INMAN: As a rule.

W. F. JOHNSON: Quite often.

N. W. NILES: Yes.

T. R. PELL: No.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes.

A. M. SQUAIR: More frequently there than in the other corner, unless I find that my opponent can smash best from that corner. I myself can smash better from there than in the forehand corner.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Nine times out of ten.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Sometimes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Sometimes.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

Mathey Thinks Most Players Expect It

DEAN MATHEY: At times. However, I think that this has been the custom so long that most everyone is always prepared for this shot.

R. C. SEAVER: Try to.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes, if I can do so.

I. C. WRIGHT: Not necessarily.

W. C. GRANT: Not necessarily; it depends where my opponent is, in his court.

XIV.

POSITION PLAY

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Never come to rest between the service and the base-lines; this is the forbidden zone.*

2—*All volleys should be made from well in front of the service-line.*

3—*When forced to defence, retire to behind the base-line.*

4—*Study the centre theory and use it for safety in net play; it cannot be used against an opponent at the net.*

5—*Don't run around the ball to protect a weak backhand; play it the right way and so build up your weakness to strength.*

Base-Line Play vs. Volleying

NO CONSIDERATION of the question of position in court could be undertaken without discussing the time-honored controversy of base-line vs. volleying methods. Almost from the infancy of the game, this has been a much-mooted question, and one that has never been definitely settled beyond dispute.

Could a perfect volleyer beat a perfect base-line player? That is the question. There is no doubt that good base-line play will always beat poor volleying, and that good volleying will al-

ways beat poor base-line play. The only question then is whether perfect volleying or perfect base-line play will win from the other. And this is purely an academic question after all, for we have no perfect base-liners and no perfect volleyers. Among the others, it is invariably a question of relative skill, not relative methods of play.

Purely an Academic Question

No matter what the answer may be to the academic question raised, there is no doubt that a judicious combination of the two styles will beat either alone. The ideal lawn tennis player is he who makes his own openings for the killing strokes from the back of the court; who goes to the net at the turn of the tide, and then finally administers the *coup de grace* at the proper moment. It is he who never makes a fancy killing shot, but never misses an easy kill; he who is able to dislodge a net volleyer with a well-timed lob if he cannot pass him outright, and he who can hold his place at the net against the best passing and lobbing.

The Ideal Player Combines Both Styles

There are sound principles back of every combination that comes up on the court, and the intelligent student of the game becomes as familiar with the possibilities of the different positions as a chess player with the different variations of the opening and the other familiar groupings of the pieces. There are also known angles very similar to those of the billiard table which are as fixed as in that game, but which can be partially overcome by artificial means, as they are by the English of the billiard player.

Sound Principles and Known Angles Involved

To begin with the fundamentals, the player's

Position Depends on Fixed Rules

position in court must be governed chiefly by the position of the ball first, then by the position of the opponent, and finally by the known characteristics of the antagonist's play. If your return has carried the ball far over to the right of the other man's court, your waiting position must be correspondingly to your own left to anticipate his next shot. Similarly, you must lean toward your own right when you have played the ball far out to the left side of your opponent's court.

Basis of the Centre Theory

Speaking generally, you are safer on sharp cross-court angles the farther you are from the net, and the more in danger the nearer you approach the net. Conversely, you are more or less safe in the net position according to how near the centre of your opponent's court the ball is placed when he is ready to make his next return. This is the basis of what is known as the centre theory, and those who study it most closely find it the best means of strengthening their net attack.

Angles at the Disposal of the Adversary

A glance at the accompanying diagram will explain perhaps better than can be done in words what the centre theory is. It is based on the possible angles that the opponent has at his disposal to pass you on the next stroke. At the net, the volleyer has a limited time in which to move over from his position to either side to anticipate the next stroke of his adversary, and the faster the ball is hit, the less time will be allowed for this shift. It is very seldom that the opponent will play the ball straight at you—on the contrary, his object will be to play it out of your reach, and

the further away from you he places it, and the faster he hits it, the less time you will have to reach the ball.

Speed Greatest on Side-Line Shots

As a drive with much pace requires greater length in order that the ball shall have room to make the necessary drop from the height of the net to the ground before reaching the boundary lines of the court, a straight side-line stroke can always carry more speed than a cross-court shot. Now, a side-line shot cannot be played from the middle of the court. A cross-court to the side-line can be made, but this is not a line pass, which can only be made from one side directly parallel with the line. Therefore, it is apparent that it is doubly difficult to use speed from the middle of the court, unless the return be made to travel straight down the centre, to gain the full length of the court to the base-line, and such an attempt is easy to anticipate at the net no matter how much pace it carries.

Cross-Court Shots Must Be Slow

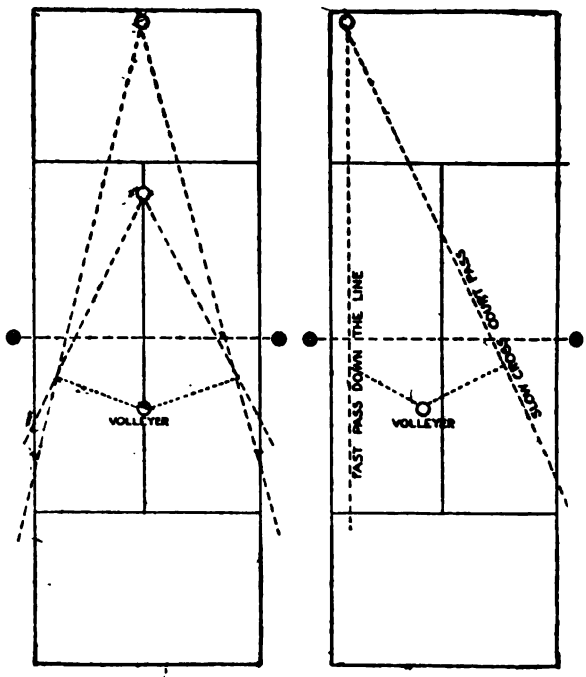
Even the speed of the cross-court shot is very much limited by forcing the opponent to play it from the centre of the court. If he is off at either side of the court, his ball may have the full width of the court for its flight before it need drop to keep in court, but from the centre, the greatest distance that is offered is half the width of the court plus the lengthwise distance it can travel before reaching the side-lines.

By keeping your opponent in the centre of his court, then, you force him to cut down the speed of his passing strokes or play out of court. The more he lessens his speed the more time you will

Fast Balls Go Out of Court

have to reach the return, and the safer you are in close to the net. Against some players, particularly those who use the chop-stroke, I have even found it wise to use a very short ball with low bound in the centre of the court, for the closer the opponent approaches your net position, the narrower become the angles of possible direction for his passing shots.

Diagrams Explain the Centre Theory



CHANCES OF THE VOLLEYER WITH THE CENTRE THEORY AND WITHOUT IT.

Angles Shorter When Opponent Is in Close

A little study of the accompanying diagrams will make it plain that in the centre theory, the striking point at which the adversary hits the ball is the apex of a triangle, the sides of which are the lines of his possible passing strokes, and

the base of which is that part of the net that the volleyer is able to cover. Now the sides of this triangle diverge more rapidly when the opponent is drawn further forward in his court by short shot. In addition to this, he must play a slower ball, as his angle of direction becomes more difficult, and this in turn adds to your advantage in the additional time allowed to reach his return.

It Is Dangerous to Play Short at the Side

On the other hand, note what happens when you go to the net on a ball placed off at one side, as shown in the second diagram. Whether your man be at the left or right side of his court, he will have the choice of a fast side-line drive, with the full length of the court wide open to him, and a short cross-court pass with the full width of the court in front of you. You cannot possibly afford to play a short ball to the side, for this wide choice with the side opening for a fast ball, will give your opponent such a golden opportunity that it is almost hopeless to try to hold the net position from such a weak stroke.

Volleyer in Trouble After Such a Shot

There is nothing more dangerous to the net volleyer than to find his opponent with this choice, and one waits in this position with fear and trembling, metaphorically speaking if not physically so, when he hesitates whether to dodge to the right or the left to intercept the next attempt at a pass. Nothing is more welcome to the average tournament player than to find his opponent at the net with the ball short and off to one side of his court, preferably of course on the forehand side, and the option in his hands of playing a fast side-line shot, with the long white line to guide his

eye in placing the ball, or a short teasing cross-court drop stroke that is so difficult for the volleyer to reach, and if reached to kill.

How to Apply the Centre Theory

If we accept the centre theory as the safest to work on, as the majority of experienced tournament experts have already done, the question arises as to how it can be best employed. In service, it is doubly valuable as a help in getting to the net safely, for it has the same effect here and will lessen the speed of the striker and cut off his angles of passing. This has been more completely treated in the chapter on the service.

A Distinct Help for Defence

In general play, it is a distinct help for defence, and a valuable forcing play for attack. One must remember that every stroke of the game is not intended to win outright; some of them are intended by wise players to furnish future opportunities for killing strokes. One needs defence at the back line, and to keep the ball down the middle of the court helps to prevent the adversary from finding winning openings and limits his chances of getting you into difficulties that will provide them.

To Force an Adversary to Come In

If I were opposed by a player whom I felt I could not actually beat and still thought he might lose by unsteadiness, I could think of no safer play than to return everything possible to the centre of his base-line and let him drive the balls out in his effort to put them out of my reach. This applies to base-line play of course, and would be feasible only so long as the opponent stayed back in his court. Unless he were a powerful ground-stroke player, such a campaign would almost cer-

tainly drive him to running up to the net, and should you be opposed by a man whom you were very anxious to draw up to the net, this is one of the best ways to do it.

No Value Against a Volleyer

Once your adversary has gone forward to volley, however, the usefulness of the centre theory is gone. Then you must pass him or lob, unless he hangs back far enough to give him a dropping shot at the net that he cannot kill.

Most Useful for Safety in Net Attack

But apart from purely defensive play, the centre theory is most valuable for safety in attacking and as a forcing stroke. The most difficult manoeuver of the net attack is getting safely to the net position. The idea that one only has to run up when he gets ready to volley, will be dispelled the first time it is tried against a good passing adversary. The right time must be chosen for such a shift and even then the way must be prepared by the proper play. With the opponent far off to one side of his court it is often safe to run in by driving the next ball to the opposite side, but the safety of this play depends largely on his inability to pass well when running fast, for if he can you will offer him just the chance he wants to win the rally.

Drive to Centre of Base-Line

It would be better to drive that next ball deep down the centre of the court to near the base-line and then run straight in. Your chances of being passed will be lessened, and moreover, your being able to run straight instead of diagonally up will keep your weight in line with the flight of the ball and nearer the line of the most probable flight of

the next return, than if the ball were placed off to one side before running in.

When Up, a Good Defence of Net Position

Once settled safely at the net the centre theory is still a splendid defence of your position if you do not get the opportunity at once to end the play by killing the ball. There are many times when a man is volleying that he can return the ball but cannot kill it, and then the part of wisdom is to keep the other man from passing and wait for a better opening for the kill you are playing for. Again the centre theory is needed, for the volley that does not kill is better in the center of the court so that the next return shall not turn the tables against you and put you on the defensive.

Sharp Angles Always Full of Danger

From every viewpoint then, the centre theory is a help to defence and a greater help to safety while attacking. For the man who wants to throw all caution to the winds and rip and slash his way through all opposition, perhaps the better course is to adopt only the sharpest angles for all his strokes, but this opens him up to even greater dangers than he is hoping to ensnare his antagonist with, and unless he is very skillful at this style of game the safer man on the other side of the net is likely to beat him.

Centre Principle Used Without the Name

Among many of the experts who do not openly recognize this centre theory, which was put into practical use, if not invented, by R. D. Wrenn twenty years ago against Larned and Neel, the same principles are in use without the name. One may object to calling the principle a theory, and perhaps he is right, but it is good sound tennis,

and a careful study and practice of its use will improve the game of many of those who do not understand position play properly.

Definition of the Forcing Stroke

The forcing stroke is one that is not intended to win outright but to force the opponent into such difficulties that will later furnish an opportunity to make the winning shot. The inspired player who makes winning strokes from all kinds of impossible angles may be very much admired by the gallery but he is seldom found as consistently in the column with the winners as his brother who does not make so many fancy kills, but adopts the forcing stroke as a method of producing easy chances and then never fails to take advantage of an easy opening when he gets it.

Keeping the Other Man in Trouble

In defence, it is used to embarrass the antagonist so that the attack can be turned against him, and during an attack it keeps the other man constantly in trouble when no winning opening is presented, so that the attack cannot be turned against you. At the net, a ball often comes that it is not possible to kill outright, yet it can be played with another forcing stroke that will furnish the chance. It should be placed short across or deep into the corner unless the centre theory is used, as it is always dangerous to allow the opponent to get close in when a ball is placed to the side.

Volleyer Need Not Always Play for an Ace

With an opponent at the base-line, the volleyer often has the choice of trying to cut his volley off short to one side for an ace, or of playing it deep into the opposite court to force a better opening for a winning stroke. It is dangerous to

try this short cross-court volley unless the other man is far enough back and to one side of his court to allow that stroke to win outright. If the adversary has time to get in and play the ball he is likely to be so close to you, and so far to one side that he will have an easy opening for a passing stroke that should score the ace.

If No Opening to Kill, Use Forcing Stroke

When no sure opening exists for a winning shot, a deep volley to one extreme corner is likely to draw the opponent off enough in that direction to furnish the opening on the next return for the winning short cross-volley to the opposite side, unless of course the other man anticipates your strategy and lobs or scores a pass from the deep ball you offer him.

Correct Position for Volleying

The correct volleying position is in the centre of the angles of the possible good returns of the adversary, and it must be shifted from side to side as the ball is played toward one side or the other. How close it should be to the net opens up one of the most difficult questions that have developed in the game. The English players, many of them, volley from near the service-line, and the ball has always dropped well below the top of the net before it reaches them. This position makes it necessary to volley underhand and with a lifting stroke that of itself limits the speed of the ball. It robs the player of the opportunity to meet it while still rising, which is a wonderful advantage.

English Ideas Are Changing

Americans all come in much closer to volley and Australians also find a closer position more profitable. Even the British experts of the last

few years have seemed to appreciate the weakness of their backward position for volleying and they approach closer to the net than those of previous decades, although still further away than the average American tournament player. Kidson, the best Australian authority, places the volleying position at fifteen feet from the net and aggressive American volleyers cut this to from eight to twelve feet.

Advantage of the Close Net Position

The advantage of the closer net position must be apparent at a glance. It permits the ball to be struck when at its maximum height and before it falls below the top of the net, which in itself adds greatly to the attacking power of the volley. Then the time allowed the opponent to anticipate the stroke is lessened by the shorter flight of both the coming and going ball, and the angles of possible winning shots are decreased rapidly as the volleyer's position approaches the net.

Drawbacks Against It

The drawbacks to offset this advantage lie in the shorter time the volleyer has to reach the ball, and the danger of overhead attack by lobbing. There is no doubt that the lobbing danger is increased by every yard that the volleyer creeps forward, but this can be offset by good footwork, and if the quick-moving volleyer is always on his guard against this danger he need have little fear of it.

Williams's Weakness at the Net

Williams, for instance, hangs back badly in his volleying, and his failure to go in close to the aggressive net position shown in the international matches last year, was apparently due more to his fear of being lobbed than to any desire to volley

from that position. His dread of the overhead attack, on the other hand, would disappear if he used better footwork and was ready when close to the net to start back quickly without turning.

Volleyer Must Always Be Ready to Get Back

One can approach the net safely only so far as his quickness and preparedness will permit him to back away under a good lob and still play it before it has touched the ground. It is always a defensive play to let a lob bound, for if you are caught so close in that you must turn and play the ball from the bound, the quick adversary is almost certain to have followed up his successful lob to the net and taken the attacking position away from you. The ability to come in close increases materially with good footwork because that is the basis of a man's ability to back away fast. A quick eye, a quick brain, and speedy co-ordination of muscles with mind are what count most, of course, in the final analysis of most all the problems of the game, as in this case.

Length Limits the Power of the Attack

Primarily, length is defensive, and only in a passing shot is it an advantage in an attempt to score. It is always a strong bulwark in defence, but limits the power of the attack because the possible directions of attacking strokes on deep returns keep the ball nearly parallel with the sidelines and within a range of the width of the baseline, making it easier for the opponent to cover his position. He will have less distance to travel, if all of your returns fall in the back of his court, when he need only trot across from one side to the other.

When length is varied as well as side placing,

KARL H. BEHR

R. LINDLEY MURRAY

Two Styles of Backhand Volleying

Both of these pictures show the forward foot lifted and the weight on the back foot. Behr is distinctly moving backward, although already far back for volleying. Murray's racket illustrates well the backward bevel that is generally needed for horizontal volley strokes.

ANTHONY F. WILDING

DWIGHT F. DAVIS

Two Styles of Net Play.

Wilding at the net was always inclined to be safe and cautious, while Davis carried his play to the other extreme, killing overhead with extreme speed and reckless abandon. Davis smashed even harder than McLoughlin and was very deadly on this stroke.

Great Possibilities in the Front of the Court

the attack becomes more dangerous. There are far greater possibilities in the front of the court for attack than have ever yet been developed, although Holcombe Ward and Beals Wright did more in this line, particularly in stop-volleys and short cross-court cuts, than has been accomplished by more recent experts. It is even more difficult for a player to run forward and backward than it is to run from side to side in his court. An attack, therefore, that is varied, not only by side placing, but by short and deep balls alternately, will be specially dangerous to him.

Winning Openings in Short Volleys

At the net, this varying of length is also possible by the mixing of stop-volleys with deep strokes. The great danger here lies in letting the other man get in close, as I have said before, so the stop-volley is generally used only as a stroke for an outright win. But short cut-volleys from side to side are very effective when varied with deep returns to the base-line.

Two Bases for Play Advisable

In correct position play, there should be two distinct bases, one for volleying and another for ground strokes, to one of which the skilful player should return after each stroke. These will be varied slightly from time to time during play by the exigencies of the occasion and the position of the ball. For defensive play, for practically all ground strokes, the position should be behind the base-line, and how far behind it depends chiefly on your opponent's length and speed and your own preference as to height in taking the ball. The player who plays a rising ball well can of course come in a little closer for his ground

strokes than he who prefers to hit the ball after it has started to fall from its maximum height.

Baddeley's Forbidden Zone

But in fast play it is seldom safe to come to rest inside of the base-line unless you are in front of the service-line. Wilfred Baddeley, one of the early English masters, proscribed as a "forbidden zone" all of the court between the service and base-lines, and presented the fixed principle that in fast play no man should come to rest within this territory. You can run through it safely as often as you like, but keep on the move while there, either forward or backward, and come to rest only behind the base-line or well forward for the volley. If drawn into the "forbidden zone" to make a return the player should instantly, after making his stroke, go forward to continue his attack, or backward if the circumstances advise a defensive position on the next return. How close the volleying position should be has already been discussed, but according to American ideas this should be from eight to twelve feet from the net.

Maintaining Position Sidewise

A very important principle of position play demands that the careful player be not drawn out of position sidewise, as well as forward or back. After being forced far out to the side of the court, time must be reserved by some means to get back to the playing centre. This is easy with a deep slow drive if the opponent is in the back of his court, but if he is at the net, a lob may be the only means to gain the needed time to recover position. If this is played high and deep, however, it will generally afford the relief needed,

unless the other man is a dangerous smasher, when you may be forced into the choice between an outright passing stroke or a sure loss of the point.

How a Weak Backhand Loses Many Points

Uneven development of one kind of play often forces the player out of position sidewise. A man with a weak backhand, which is the most common defect encountered, will frequently run around the balls at his left, so that he may play them with his stronger forehand stroke. But this apparent advantage is exposing a weakness in another direction by his being drawn off to the side. The loss in position which results from playing the same ball forehand when it should be played backhand is six to eight feet, and it takes time to recover this much space when the play is fast.

Running Around the Ball Poor Tactics

Take a simple case. A ball is placed over close to your left line and should be played with a backhand stroke. If properly played, your position will be perhaps three feet inside the line when the ball is hit. If you run around the ball, you will be about three or four feet outside the line when you hit the ball, some six or seven feet further from the center of the court than if you had played the ball correctly. Now, if the next return be placed far off to the opposite side, or be volleyed down the right side at all, you will find it difficult to get back in time, and if you fail it will probably be by less than six feet, so that those precious six feet lost by running around the ball will have been enough to cost you the point.

A Secondary Defence, at Best

As Little says, running around the ball is only a secondary defence that should be adopted

only when it is impossible to hit it in the natural way. It is far better to play it badly in the right way and practice on the weak stroke until it has been mastered, for it should be unnecessary to run around the ball in this way. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and a tennis player is no stronger than his weakest stroke, if his adversary knows how to take advantage of that weakness.

McLoughlin's Success No Criterion

Some quick players, those especially quick on their feet, are able to successfully run around the ball, and McLoughlin did it constantly against Brookes in the Internationals last year, running around the services of the great Australian in the left court, which were carefully placed on his backhand side. But McLoughlin might do with his quickness on his feet much that the ordinary player could not do, and it is a poor play to rely on at best. When forced into this make-shift, one should never play safe, but hit hard for an ace.

Attacking Weakness Through Strength

Against such players, a constant attack of the weak side is not always the best. It is often better to attack their weakness through their strength by drawing them off first to the side on which they are best, so that the ball can be placed so far to the other side that they have not time to run around it. This is often better than forcing the weaker side and depending on winning an ace on the next stroke because they are out of position.

The two critical points in position play lie in the rush for the net when the man at the back

Two Critical Moments in Position Play

of his court takes the bit in his teeth and tries to win by volleying, and the time when the opponent lobs over his head. If the volleyer backs away and smashes or volleys the lob, he must spring forward again immediately to prevent the next return, if he has not killed the ball, from falling at his feet. On the other hand, if the volleyer lets the ball drop and turns to return it off the ground, that is the time the other man must be ready at once to take advantage of his success by rushing in the instant he sees the other start to turn.

Seize the Net Position Without Delay

The possession of the net position implies an advantage of fifty per cent. in the power of the attack, and every clear opportunity to seize it without unnecessary danger of being passed should be taken advantage of without hesitation or delay.

Do Not Play Into the Other Man's Hands

But the position in court and the wisdom of taking the net at all depend largely on the style of play that the opponent is best at. One should not play into his hands, and it may be part of his strategy to draw you in to the net because he is especially expert in the passing strokes. In such a case, it is well to be doubly wary and not to be drawn in unless the other man is in such difficulties that his chances for such a pass are reduced to the minimum.

Make Him Play the Strokes He Likes Least

On the other hand the adversary may be poor on the ground strokes, preferring himself the net position, and then every opportunity should be seized to rush in, even at the risk of some danger in getting there. It simply reduces itself to forc-

ing the other man to play the strokes he is least expert in, and at the same time to try to gain and hold the position from which you can play the game best.

Playing for the Smaller Opening

When passing an opponent at the net, the smaller opening is often the best if he is moving fast to get back into position. Suppose you have tried a pass along his right line; suppose he has jumped across in time to intercept it and you are selecting the opening for the next attempt. If the opponent has hardly had time to get back to his playing center again, he will probably be on the move when you hit the ball the second time and still going toward the centre.

Catching the Opponent Off His Balance

Often the opposite side seems to offer a much wider opening to place the ball through, but one must remember that he can cover more ground in the direction he is moving than the opposite way, for it takes time to stop and turn. It is often best in such cases to play for the smaller opening, that is, to try the same side again, although he may be just leaving that side of the court when you start your stroke. This is called catching your man off his balance by the tournament experts, and they find it very profitable if the direction of the play is well covered.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS.

Against a persistent lobber, would you stay up and smash or go back to stop the lobbing?

Stay Up or Back Against a Lobber?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Depends on conditions.

T. C. BUNDY: Stay up and kill, if your overhead is developed; if not, develop it.

K. H. BEHR: Stay up and keep smashing.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Stay up, speaking personally.

R. D. LITTLE: Stay up and smash. If you can't stand the lobbing strain, you can never win from the base-line.

H. H. HACKETT: Stay up.

B. C. WRIGHT: Remain at the net.

J. C. PARKE: Doesn't affect me.

C. P. DIXON: This would depend on my form at the time. Should start smashing, but if making many mistakes should retire to the base-line.

Smash Him Out, Says Murray

R. L. MURRAY: Stay up and smash him out.

G. M. CHURCH: Stay up and smash.

W. M. WASHBURN: It depends how I was smashing. I should stay up unless I was completely demoralized overhead.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Stay up and smash.

CLARENCE HOBART: Try both.

E. B. DEWHURST: The former if I was able.

J. R. STRACHAN: Stay up and smash.

C. R. GARDNER: Which ever seemed best in the particular instance.

A. S. DABNEY: I'd stay back to stop it if I was losing by smashing badly.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Stay up and smash.

F. C. INMAN: Up and smash.

W. F. JOHNSON: A consistent division.

N. W. NILES: Stay up. If very bad overhead for some reason like sun, might stay back if opponent did not come up.

Pell Thinks a Good Lobber Would Drive Smasher Back

T. R. PELL: You can't stay up on a good lobber; better keep back.

ROBERT LEROY: I don't know; I should probably try to do each in turn.

A. M. SQUAIR: Stay up in most cases.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Stay up and smash.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Stay up and smash.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Stay up and smash.

W. M. HALL: Stay up unless I was missing.

Most Others Advise Staying Up

RICHARD HARTE: Stay up and smash and if one smashes well he will soon behave.

DEAN MATHEY: Stay up and smash.

R. C. SEAVER: If I was a good net player I would stay up as long as I could.

G. C. SHAFER: Stay up if in smashing form, otherwise back.

S. H. VOSHELL: Stay up.

E. H. WHITNEY: Stay up and smash.

I. C. WRIGHT: Stay up; wait for a short one.

W. C. GRANT: I should stay up.

Do you believe base-line play or volleying the stronger game?

Which Is the Stronger Game, Base-Line or Net?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Both together.

T. C. BUNDY: Volleying.

K. H. BEHR: Of the two, volleying generally.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Volleying.

R. D. LITTLE: Volleying is the winning aggressive game, but the base-line is a very necessary thing.

H. H. HACKETT: Volleying in exceptional cases. Base-line play ordinarily.

B. C. WRIGHT: Volleying, as the modern game of aggressiveness has proved.

J. C. PARKE: Depends entirely on the calibre of the player.

C. P. DIXON: Neither; the strongest game is the blend or mixture of both and the right judgment in use of either. The two Dohertys were well armed at all points. I don't deny, however, that a one-stroke player may go a good way.

R. L. MURRAY: Volleying.

G. M. CHURCH: I think that volleying is the stronger game.

W. M. WASHBURN: It depends on the individual.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Volleying.

Hobart Believes in the Base-Line Game

CLARENCE HOBART: The perfect base-line player would beat the perfect volleyer.

E. B. DEWHURST: As the service rules are at present, volleying is the winning game.

J. R. STRACHAN: I think that base-line play is stronger.

C. R. GARDNER: Would you prefer a million dollars' worth of diamonds or a million dollars' worth of pearls?

A. S. DABNEY: Volleying.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: A combination.

F. C. INMAN: Most players in this country win at the net.

W. F. JOHNSON: A perfect back-court game always the best.

Smith Might Beat Any Volleyer

N. W. NILES: Volleying, so far as both have been developed. From what I hear, the Englishman, Smith, in his prime could beat any volleyer from back court.

T. R. PELL: Volleying.

ROBERT LEROY: Volleying.

A. M. SQUAIR: Volleying.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I don't believe in either style to the exclusion of the other always.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Volleying with a strong service; vice versa without.

Most Americans Favor the Volley Game

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Volleying.

W. M. HALL: I think the volleying game will beat base-line, other things equal.

RICHARD HARTE: If played well, there is little to choose.

Don't Crowd the Net Rashly, Says Shafer

DEAN MATHEY: Volleying.

R. C. SEAVER: Volleying.

G. C. SHAFER: Volleying when you have the opening. Crowd the net when you can, but not too rashly.

S. H. VOSHELL: Volleying.

E. H. WHITNEY: I think the two styles must be used together, with the pendulum swinging in favor of the volley.

I. C. WRIGHT: Volleying.

W. C. GRANT: I should try to reach the net whenever I could.

Will not a combination of both styles beat either alone?

Will Combination of Both Beat Either?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes.

T. C. BUNDY: Depends entirely on how efficient.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Perfection in both styles would, but do not consider that possible.

R. D. LITTLE: Yes, in perfection.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes, but seventy-five per cent. volleying.

J. C. PARKE: Probably.

C. P. DIXON: Yes.

R. L. MURRAY: At its best, yes.

Church Thinks Not

G. M. CHURCH: I don't think so, because if a man pays equal attention to both volleying and groundstrokes, he will not be as expert in either one as if he specialized in it.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes, if good enough.

E. B. DEWHURST: Yes, the striker is a base-liner every other game.

C. R. GARDNER: Depends.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes, on the average.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Theoretically, yes.

F. C. INMAN: Yes.

W. F. JOHNSON: Yes.

Most Other Players Say It Will

N. W. NILES: A remarkable server and volleyer apparently will beat one having the combination, if latter is not almost as good at net and back-court as former is at net. However, a combination will usually win.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, decidedly.

A. M. SQUAIR: Decidedly yes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Always.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Probably.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

DEAN MATHEY: Not necessarily; witness McLoughlin.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes, usually.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Yes.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

Are there not bigger possibilities in the use of the front of the court for aces, in short cross-court strokes and short balls, than have yet been developed?

Are There More Possibilities in the Front Court?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: It is hard to predict the future.

T. C. BUNDY: Yes.

K. H. BEHR: I suppose so.

F. B. ALEXANDER: No more than Holcombe Ward developed.

R. D. LITTLE: I don't think so. The greatest pos-

sibilities to come are in change of pace, study of position and balance.

Ward Said to Have Done All Possible

H. H. HACKETT: I doubt if there are greater possibilities than developed by Ward at his best.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes, most players go for passing shots too much.

J. C. PARKE: No.

C. P. DIXON: Possibly so, but I have still faith in development of swerve, break, twist and cut strokes. I do not consider that all these have been fully exploited so far.

Much Difference in Views on This Question

R. L. MURRAY: There certainly are.

G. M. CHURCH: I do not think so.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes. However, such strokes are exceptionally hard to control.

ELIA FOTTRELL: I think so.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes.

E. B. DEWHURST: May be, but very difficult off the fast service and driving of to-day.

C. R. GARDNER: I think so.

A. S. DABNEY: I don't think so.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Probably.

F. C. INMAN: Yes, but few of our players could make the shots today.

Johnson Believes There is Always Room for Improvement

W. F. JOHNSON: Yes, there is always a chance for greater development.

N. W. NILES: I believe every practical shot of the above variety is, or has been, used as a regular play, *i. e.,* Beals Wright's slow shots cut to your feet; Englishmen's sharp cross-court off the service in doubles, etc. No one person, I guess, has ever developed the majority of these shots. If he did, I think he might do so at the expense of the rest of his game.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

Indeed There Are, Says LeRoy

ROBERT LEROY: Indeed there are. Look at the way the Johnson brothers of Boston used these strokes in doubles a few years ago with great success. It can also be done in singles.

A. M. SQUAIR: Quite possibly.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I don't know.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Beals Wright, best exponent of this game.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: I think so.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

DEAN MATHEY: Simply a question of getting in closer to the net.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: Probably—but we have some excellent net men.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

Whitney Does Not Think So

E. H. WHITNEY: I don't think so. If you overdo this kind of play, you will either be passed easier or get lobbed over your head.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

Do you use the "centre theory" in running to the net?

Do All Experts Use Centre Theory?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Not always.

T. C. BUNDY: Depends whether opponent is cross-courter or straight driver.

K. H. BEHR: Against a balanced player almost always.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Not always.

R. D. LITTLE: To some extent.

H. H. HACKETT: At times.

B. C. WRIGHT: No.

J. C. PARKE: Sometimes.

Both Englishmen Favor It

C. P. DIXON: Yes, with good length to support it, but there is nothing like varying your game and placement.

R. L. MURRAY: Yes, I do at times.

G. M. CHURCH: About half the time.

W. M. WASHBURN: Unless I wish to place to my

opponent's backhand, or to some unguarded point in his court.

CLARENCE HOBART: Sometimes.

E. B. DEWHURST: Yes.

Strachan Runs Up in the Centre

J. R. STRACHAN: I very seldom run to the net, but when I do I run up in the centre.

C. R. GARDNER: Not so much as I should, perhaps.

A. S. DABNEY: Sometimes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: As a rule.

F. C. INMAN: Often, but not always.

W. F. JOHNSON: Yes.

N. W. NILES: If the "centre theory" means, running to the net down as nearly the centre of the court as possible when not anticipating, I do use it.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, when I can, but I have difficulty because I am accustomed to play my ground-strokes close to the side-lines.

A. M. SQUAIR: Usually, not always.

Says Armstrong: "No Theories for Me"

G. F. TOUCHARD: Yes.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No theories for me.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: At times, particularly against chop-stroke players.

RICHARD HARTE: A little.

DEAN MATHEY: At times. Believe it to be absolutely sound.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: Somewhat, but usually play to the weak spot and then run in.

S. H. VOSHELL: Sometimes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Only intuitively.

I. C. WRIGHT: Depends on position.

W. C. GRANT: In serving, I follow the direction of the ball, *i. e.,* in serving to the corners, I play a little to that side of the centre of the centre-line.

XV.

MATCH PLAY TACTICS

FIVE CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Feel out your opponent at all points and attack his weakest spot.*
2—*Finding a vulnerable point, hammer away at it unceasingly.*
3—*Shift tactics always when losing, but never change a winning style.*
4—*Save your strength by judicious finesse, and if your opponent weakens, play safe.*
5—*Banish all spectacular gallery strokes, and play to the score, not the crowd, if you want to win.*

Little's Book on "Inside Tennis"

BEFORE TOUCHING on the subject of match-play tactics, I feel inclined to suggest that a goodly part of the volume under the title of "Tennis Tactics," written by Raymond D. Little a few years ago, might safely be reprinted here under this head, and I could hardly hope to improve on it. Certainly, Little's expounding of the inner workings of the best players, his "inside tennis," as baseball lovers might describe that part of the game, is most lucid, most helpful and most enlightening to the great majority of those who are safely past the first prin-

ciples and who want to improve on their match play skill. It is a book for tournament players, not for beginners, but the best of its kind extant.

Mental Attitude Appealed to

The mental attitude of the player is what I wish to appeal to chiefly in this chapter; it is a point of the game too often neglected. We often consider, or many of us do, that winning or losing at tennis is simply a matter of which player can hit the ball most skillfully. But this is not so; there is much more in the mental work of the players and we constantly see an inferior stroke player beating one who seems to be the better. *Cherchez le brains!*

You Know What You Can Do, But Not Your Opponent

Unless you are very familiar with your adversary's play, when a match or even a practice game begins, you know very closely what you can do yourself, but you seldom know what the other man will do. That is a condition of mental uncertainty that ruins the hopes of many tournament players. They feel that they must win from the start or not at all, and they become so engrossed with the making of their own strokes that they have no time to discover what the other man is doing.

Feeling Out the Other Man's Strokes

Personally, after twenty years of tournament play, I found that I was still in a most receptive frame of mind whenever I met a player with whose game I was not familiar. I was perfectly content to play at the start the most ordinary strokes with as much variety as I could muster, and to watch my man very closely to see how he handled each variation that I offered him. First, I watched to see whether he was better at backhand or fore-

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WILLIAM A. LARNED

Moderate Smash of a Lob.

Generally an overhead volley of this kind is quite as effective for killing a short lob as a hard smash, and entails much less risk of error. A dropping ball can be volleyed off to one side and killed without excessive speed. The left foot here has come forward to check the weight. Compare this with position of Wilding before making a similar stroke.

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ANTHONY F. WILDING

Waiting for an Overhead Smash

This shows the splendid action of the ex-champion waiting to kill a deep lob. As the racket comes down the left foot will move forward to check the weight thrown into the stroke. Stepping forward to meet the ball always gives better power than letting the ball meet the racket.

hand; then, if he seemed to prefer cross-courting or driving down the lines; next, if he always returned the service in a stereotyped fashion; when I went to the net, whether he lobbed at all, or confined his efforts to trying to pass. Sometimes, I would deliberately leave an opening at one side of the court to learn if he was observant and watching for quick openings.

Hammer Away at His Weakness

This is the way the experienced tournament player sizes up his man and learns where lie the best openings for attack. Once this has been learned, half the battle is over and then it is only a matter of steadily hammering at the weaknesses in the enemy's armour to gradually run the score up to the winning total. But one cannot take it easy on the court even after this stage has been reached. Remember, the other man may be thinking, too; he may fathom your method of attack, and you may suddenly find that he is anticipating your strokes.

A Weak Backhand Furnishes a Target

Let me tell a little story of a match some years ago in the New York state championship at Syracuse to illustrate the point I am trying to explain. I met the late Alexander Jenney in the semi-final round in this tournament after he had vanquished several pretty strong players. Jenney was entirely unknown to me but he had the reputation of playing a wonderfully strong forehand drive. The entire local contingent had turned out to see their favorite meet one of the visiting players, and their hopes ran high at the start when the studying process began.

Ball after ball that went to Jenney's forehand

A Story Illustrates the Point

came back faster than I had ever seen tennis balls fly before. His drives were literally unplayable; I could not even reach them, much less return them, and it became apparent in the first game or two why he had beaten the other men. I tried the backhand side and the ball came back awkwardly and with little speed. His backhand returns were so slow and so high over the net that it was easy to go to the net and volley with little risk of being passed.

Protecting Backhand Exposes Forehand

But Jenney soon saw that the attack was directed at his left and worked over to that side to protect his weakness until he left so much of his forehand court open that it was an easy matter to ace him on that side. After the first three or four games, my opponent had very few opportunities to play his favorite forehand stroke, as the ball was kept always on his backhand until he worked over too far, and then he was driven back into his correct position in the middle of the court by an ace or two out so far on his forehand that he could not reach them. From 3—0 in his favor in the first set, the match was lost by 3—6, 0—6, yet his forehand strokes were better than mine at all times.

Uncertainty of Attack Spells Success

Once an opponent's weakness is discovered, the attack should be centered at this point so long as it is successful, but be always on the watch for a shift on his part that will show he is anticipating your attack. That is the time to change it immediately. The unexpectedness of an attack is the precious jewel that wins success for it.

Yet there are one or two sound principles

Running Around Weakness to Cover Up

that can always be relied upon; they need hardly be varied. A man with a pronounced weakness on one side can always be attacked there; he cannot entirely cover it up by running around the ball, for instance. He can lean a little toward his weak side perhaps with safety, but against a quick adversary the instant he goes so far as to run around the ball, he is wide open to a winning attack, an ace I mean, on the other side. Running around a ball is at best only a secondary defence to cover a pronounced weakness.

How This Worked Out Against Ward

I have had many good demonstrations of this principle, because I was always a weak backhand player. Holcombe Ward used to drive me out of court on the left side with his American twist service and then ace me on the forehand side when I tried to run around the ball to hit it forehanded. In the right court, the ball bounded toward the centre of the court and I could with safety run out to the left and make a strong return from it without losing a safe position in court, but never on the other side.

Surprising a Player in a Set Position

There are many other points of weakness that can be found if diligently searched for. Many players have a peculiarity of becoming "set" in a fixed position when waiting for their return, and such men can almost invariably be thrown off their stroke, by directing the attack to the side where they are not expecting it.

Another delicate point to be watched is the balance of the antagonist. Some players are so quick to anticipate an attack that they show in advance what their defence is to be, while

Catching Your Opponent Off His Balance

others have a tendency to throw their weight too far in the direction they believe the return will come. Once this characteristic is learned, it is generally a wise move to delay the attack a fraction of a second, if necessary hitting the ball a little later or lower on the bound, and then turning the attack in the direction opposite to that expected.

Covering the Stroke to Increase Attack

"Covering" the stroke is another device used by many players for the same purpose. This is simply hiding its direction by altering the swing and to prevent your opponent from anticipating your shot, and makes your attack always more dangerous. If a net player, for instance, is inclined to carry his balance too far forward as he stands in the volleying position, he is always vulnerable to an overhead attack with a low lob. He will not be able to shift his weight and get back quick enough to anticipate it. The same is true of a player who leans to the right or left noticeably while waiting for an attacking stroke.

A Low Lob Catches Close Net Player

I remember using this overhead attack once with splendid success against Hugh Tallant, a player who was always too close to the net when volleying and who carried his weight too far forward to anticipate lobs. In one match for the Hudson River Championship, I remember scoring twelve aces by balls lobbed over his head that he could not reach. And a small number of strokes like this is often enough to turn defeat into victory. When players are evenly matched, the difference in their total score at the end of a match is frequently only a few points, and these may

have been turned by some small advantage like this.

One Small Point That Won the All-Comers'

Among more expert players, the weaknesses are not so often to be found, and it often takes long study to find even the slightest openings. Close study of the technique of Dwight Davis's game was enough to win the All-Comers' tournament at Newport for me in 1899. I had been beaten by Davis at Longwood the same season, but had profited by my experience. When I met him in the finals for the Championship, I had a new theory to work on. I conceived the idea that Davis, a left-handed player, could not cross-court a fast service on his backhand side short enough to pass a close volleyer. That seems like a very small opening but it was enough to win a five-set match for me, a match that carried with it the right to challenge for the National Championship.

Davis Could Not Pass Cross-Court With His Backhand

There was a difference of exactly three points in the totals of that memorable match (Paret 201, Davis 198), and I am certain that the particular manoeuver that I refer to won for me ten times as many strokes during the five sets. In the right court I served regularly to Davis's backhand (the outer edge, as Davis was left-handed) and deliberately covered the side-line to prevent his passing on that side. I was constantly exposed on the cross-court side, but the peculiar method he used in drawing across his racket for a backhand cross-court shot made it almost impossible for him to keep the ball in court when returning a fast service with enough speed to pass me. He made

many attempts which went wide and some that were slowed up enough for me to reach the ball and kill it at the net, but I was always waiting for the line pass.

Lack of Endurance Costs Many a Match

Endurance is another point to be considered in match play. At the slightest sign of weakening on the part of an adversary, it is good tactics to use every effort to prolong the match in order to outlast your man. I remember one case in point. I had played Harold Hackett a dozen or more matches with varying success, and when we came together in the fifth year for the Maine State Championship at Sorrento, I could not think of a single weakness in his game. We had each won the cup twice and he had beaten me for it the last two years. There seemed to be only one hope and that was to hit the ball harder and faster than he, but I was never good at this kind of play.

Condition Wins the Victory

However, in the early games of the match, he displayed a lack of condition, and although he was always as steady as the proverbial church, I made up my mind to try to outlast him, since I was in prime physical condition. Every effort was bent to prolonging the match and many openings for a killing smash were turned to a deep volley that would make him run more. Before the fourth set I was rewarded by seeing his strokes gradually weaken until I could safely take the net and the offensive that carried victory with it.

I met an extremely large man, St. George Perrott, an Irishman from Dublin, in the challenge round for the South of Ireland Champion-

Lobbing to a Player Who Couldn't Kill Lobs

ship at Limerick in 1898, and won in a similar way. Perrott was even larger, I think, than Dwight Davis. We had played three matches before the same day, each of us, and I didn't believe he could last as well as I could. After losing the first two sets, I lobbed persistently and he soon collapsed trying to smash these high balls, defaulting the match when it was 4—0 against him in the fourth set, for he was then hopelessly beaten.

Inability to kill lobs is another weakness to watch for. It is always a safe play to feed lobs to a man who cannot kill them. When your opponent is fresh he may smash well, but when he tires, he is never so dangerous overhead.

Pim Ignored the Adversary

Dr. Pim used to say to his friends: "I don't care what the other fellow does; it is what I do that settles the match." This may be a good plan of campaign for some few players, phenomenons who were born brilliant rather than men who have had to learn their tennis by hard work, but for the average player it is a poor policy to ignore his adversary. Larned, perhaps the most brilliant of all the American players produced, unless we except McLoughlin, used these tactics most of the time successfully, but with most other men they have been a failure.

Larned's Weakness in Defence

Larned always played his own style of game, no matter what his opponent did. He was a master of attack but very weak in defence. For him defence meant only finding some new form of attack. He kept the other man so constantly on the run and was so brilliant at passing any antagonist who dared to rush to the net against

him, that he was very seldom forced to defence. But in all my experience, I have never seen a first-class expert so much at sea as that same past-master Larned, when he was met with an unexpected attack that he could not fathom.

Luring an Opponent Away from the Centre

As I have said, the opponent must be watched constantly to see if he is anticipating your attack or even your defensive strokes, for that matter. Little tells of the play that turned one famous match between McLoughlin and Touchard at Longwood in 1911, when Touchard was persistently driving McLoughlin's service along the side lines. The Californian got so accustomed to this play that he leaned far toward the side-line as he came thundering up behind his service, and Touchard played it closer and closer to the lines until he had drawn the other man well out of position. Then when he saw that McLoughlin was anticipating his attack, he played two or three shots very slow across court, scoring clean aces each time, and after that he had his opponent guessing every time as to which side to expect the ball.

Saving an Opening for the Critical Points

I well remember playing Little in the Middle States Championship some years ago, and finding that he was deliberately playing my backhand, always a weak point with me, and taking liberties with his position at the net by protecting the side-line and exposing himself to a cross-court pass. It was too good an opening for me to use regularly, so I saved up that shot and used the cross-court stroke only when within a point of a game, and in this way won three separate games, the last

one being the final point that gave me the match.

Finesse is Valuable in Tournament Play

Finesse is a valuable acquisition to any tournament player. It is very heroic perhaps to rush after every possible return, and I have seen many seemingly impossible shots recovered and the points ultimately won. But in the long run, the average is very badly against the man who uses these tactics, and this do-or-die spirit that inspires some players to race after every distant return in the hope of making an impossible "save" is a great match loser.

Difficult "Saves" May Win One in Ten Points

Seven times out of ten when the dash is over you have missed the return; two more times you will return another weak stroke that will be killed, and perhaps only once in ten times will this effort be rewarded by ultimately winning the rest. Every time, though, you finish the rally all out of breath and in poor shape for the next play. Whether you have won or lost the previous point, you then start handicapped, make another weak return and lose the second stroke as a result of the foolish effort to retrieve an apparently impossible smash.

Turning Your Back on a Short Lob

The best tacticians I have seen would often deliberately turn their backs on a lob that they played so short there was only one chance in a dozen that the opponent would miss it. This has a way of saving the nerves, saving the breath and keeping the temper in better shape for the next point. Among good players a weak lob is almost equivalent to losing the stroke anyway, and after all you are no worse off if you make a weak lob and it is killed than if you had lobbed out of court.

Gallery Play Should Be Tabooed

Gallery shots and fancy strokes of all kinds should be tabooed in tournament play. It may tickle the vanity to have a crowd applaud a spectacular stroke, but too often the effort is costly and the scoreboard records the disastrous result of such efforts. The most effective killer of overhead balls I ever saw was H. L. Doherty, and he never wasted any effort in putting them away. A ball cannot be deader than dead, you must remember, and you can score only one point for the kill, no matter how hard you may smash it. Besides the effort of smashing hard is wasteful of the precious strength that so often wins long matches.

Don't Hurry Your Play Unduly

In preserving the condition it is well to remember that there is no call to hurry your play unduly. You are entitled to walk after the balls and back to the server's position; it is not required to run, and you are also entitled to a reasonable time to get into position to receive the service. Do not let your antagonist rush you too quickly, especially when you are losing. Walk deliberately, and breathe deeply and as slowly as possible when out of breath.

Lob High and Deep When Out of Breath

An excellent resource when you are in bad shape, when you have "bellows to mend," is to lob high and deep. An opponent who is rushing you at the net can often be stopped in this way when all attempts at passing fail. Changing the style of game is as valuable in defence, when you are losing, as on the attack when you find it going against you.

Always continue the same tactics in match

play as long as they are successful. Do not try to change the game while you are winning; keep at it till the tide turns. On the other hand, never persist in the same style of play if it is losing. Reverse the other procedure and shift your method of play at once when you feel it is not successful, and keep on changing it until you do find a winning style or until all your resources are exhausted.

Keep Up Winning Play, Shift When Losing

If you are up against a better man, possibly no amount of shifting the game will help you to win, but many a time I have seen an apparently poorer player win a match because he happened to strike one weak spot in his adversary's game. If the weaker man is quick to see his advantage and wise enough to press it, he may often beat the other man.

Another point of finesse that experienced tournament players know is what might be called playing to the score, just as card players do. In "auction" your bid is frequently governed by the condition of the score, and this is also wise in tennis at times. At forty-love or forty-fifteen, you can afford to take greater chances in passing or killing than if the score is deuce, and this holds true whether winning or losing. While serving, with the score at forty-love or love-forty, it is often well to risk the chance of a fast second service if the first delivery has failed.

Playing to the Score Helpful

In handicap play, the better player giving the odds can generally win by safe play, while the cue for the man who receives the handicap is to cut loose and try for the winning shots. Safe play will not pay the poorer man against a better.

How to Give and Take Handicaps

XVI.

DOUBLES PLAY

SIX CARDINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Cardinal Points to Keep in Mind

1—*Select a partner of even skill and sink all individuality for teamwork; pick one who volleys well.*

2—*The partner of the server must always stand close to the net, and the server must always run in on both first and second services.*

3—*Keep abreast of your partner always; if he is forced back, go back with him.*

4—*If you are forced to let a lob drop, both partners must get back to the base-line; if opponents drop a lob, both should rush in at once.*

5—*Never be caught forward of the base-line when the opponents are volleying, except to anticipate a stop-volley or a short ball.*

6—*Don't poach; let your partner play his own balls. Doubtful balls in the centre should be played by the man who can use his forehand in the stroke.*

Teamwork the Keynote of Success

THE KEYNOTE of success in doubles may be summed up in one word: "Teamwork." Select two players whose individual skill might be expressed by 50, and if they play together well, understand each other's methods and lose individuality for the success of their

team, their combined strength will represent the true total of 100.

Personal Glory Weakens Any Team

Put the same two players together in doubles, and let them try to play for individual glory, and be not familiar with each other's position in court, approximate reach and a dozen other details that go to make up a successful doubles combination, and their team strength will be no better than 75 and possibly only 70.

Tennis Team Little Stronger Than Its Weakest Link

Just as a chain is said to be no stronger than its weakest link, a tennis team is very little stronger than its weakest partner, because the opponents can judiciously select the weak spot for constant attack until they have battered down his defence. Two team-mates represented by 60 and 40 can be considered little or no better than twice the strength of the weaker man, or 80, even though they play well together and gain all the team advantage of old partners.

Choose Your Partner Carefully

These points should be considered in selecting a partner for doubles and kept in view constantly if tournament success is hoped for. Choose a partner who plays about the same game as you do, work together with him constantly to become perfectly acquainted with the different peculiarities of each other, and sacrifice all ambitions for individual glory if you would prosper as a team in doubles. One thing more: Select a partner who volleys well.

Volleying and service (which is another form of volleying) are of the greatest importance in doubles, and those who are best at this stroke are most certain to succeed in doubles. A player

who cannot volley at all, or at best very poorly, is certain to be a poor doubles player, and he should be avoided as a partner.

Play the Net, First, Last and Always

The very essence of the game lies in getting up to the net at every possible opportunity, and once there, never deserting this point of vantage until the ace is won or lost. It is for this reason that the service counts so strongly for the side that has it. Among evenly-matched teams in the best tournament play, the serving side generally wins from seventy to ninety per cent of all the games played.

Server Must Always Run Up

The servers having this advantage, it is most important that it be held, and from this was born the cardinal rule of doubles always to run up to the net on both first and second services. The server's partner is always at the net when the service is delivered—this is another inviolable rule of doubles—so that the two partners are brought side by side, both in place at the net, when the first return reaches them.

Two Partners Should Be Abreast

This position, with the two partners abreast of each other, is absolutely essential to good form. Both should be at the net as much of the time as possible, but if either is dislodged from his volleying position, by a lob or any other return, his partner should immediately follow him back as far as necessary to still keep abreast of him.

It is a deadly error in good doubles to have one partner of a team up at the net and another back, and it is absolutely inexcusable under any circumstances. No matter how weak your service may be it must be followed to the net, else your

partner will be stranded up there alone and put out of the game. If both stay back on the service games, this simply hands over the attack to the opponents with every assurance of defeat.

Never One Up and One Back

A lob is the stroke that most often drives one or both players away from the net, and if this be placed so well and played so low as to make a volleyer turn and run back to play the ball from the bound, his partner should instantly follow him back to take up a defensive position at his side at

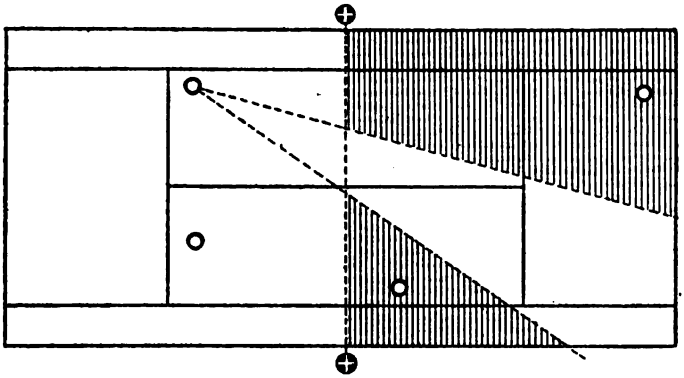


Diagram Shows the "Open Diagonal"

THE "OPEN DIAGONAL" IN DOUBLES.

the back of the court. To stay up when the partner is driven back is almost suicidal, for the opponents are almost certain to follow up their advantage to the net, and to stand up near them when they begin to volley is to court destruction.

In addition to this, there is a deadly weakness in the old-fashioned one-up-and-one-back plan of playing doubles, in the "open diagonal." A glance at the accompanying diagram will demonstrate the reason for this weakness. In this illus-

Its Weakness Apparent at Once

Net Player Stranded

tration, the shaded portions of the court are intended to illustrate the section that the players can cover if the ball is volleyed by the opponent from a position diagonally opposite the stranded net player. Whether it be a smash or a simple horizontal volley, the net player covers a minimum section of the court and leaves seven-eighths of the exposed territory for his partner at the base-line, with little or no chance for success.

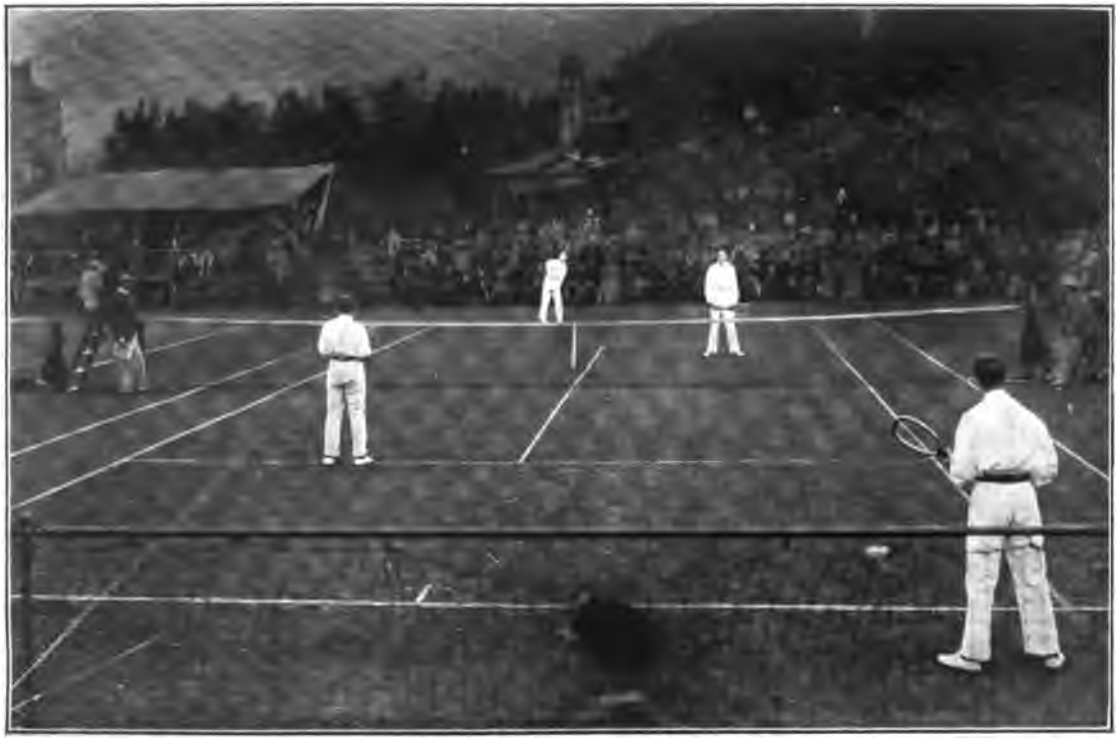
Adversary Can Smash Right "Through" Him

Still another danger awaits the luckless player who disregards this rule to get back out of danger the instant the partner is driven away from his attacking position at the net. No smash or sharp overhead volley is more certain of success than one with the ball directed immediately at the feet of an adversary who is too close in. It is a common practice among expert players to take instant advantage of such an opening, and they seldom fail to smash right "through" an adversary caught in such a helpless position.

Attack and Defence in Doubles

Even more than in singles, tennis doubles resolve themselves into a constant attack and defence, and the issue is so clear-cut and sharply-defined that the whole effort of the serving side is to maintain the advantage the service gives them and to press home their attack to a winning issue; while the players on the other side bend all their efforts to turning the attack against their opponents and gaining the winning position at the net for a volleying attack.

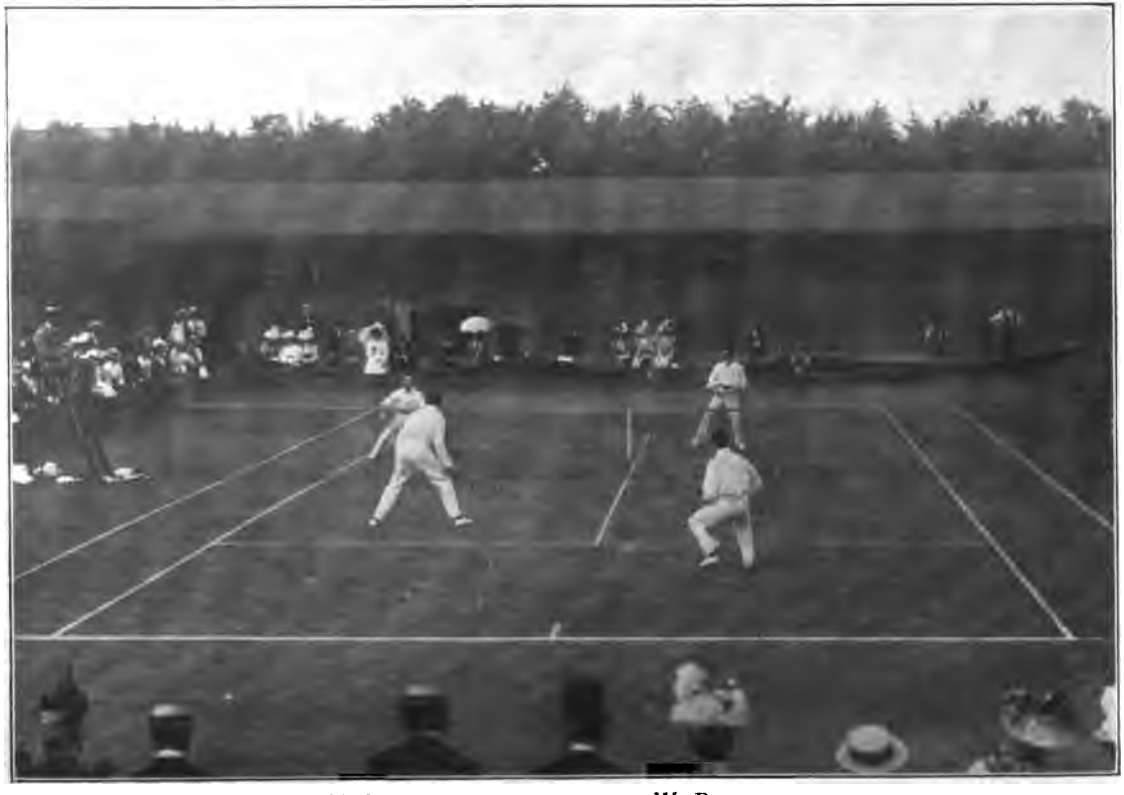
In the constant effort to offset the advantage of the service, which has been increasing for many years, all kinds of schemes have been tried. It is



H. DOHERTY R. DOHERTY

An English Doubles Final at Eastbourne.

Here is another example of the English formation for doubles, with the partner of the striker-out at the service-line. With the serving side close in to volley, it seems like courting destruction for one of the opponents to be caught in so close as this.



H. BADDELEY
R. DOHERTY

W. BADDELEY
H. DOHERTY

English Doubles With All Four Players Volleying.

This is a historical match for the English Championship on Wimbledon's famous "center court," between the Doherty brothers and the Baddeley brothers in 1897. It shows all four players in positions to volley, a game which has been displaced by the closer volleying that has since come into vogue.

Constant Struggle to "Break Through" the Service

unquestionable that the advantage exists and that it is a very heavy handicap against the other side. As the power of the service has grown steadily stronger with the increase in speed and the development of the twist deliveries, the percentage of games won by the serving side has grown higher until close doubles matches between expert teams have become a constant struggle on the part of the servers to hold their advantage, and of the other side to "break through" the service.

Changes in the Rules Suggested to Equalise

Several changes in the rules have been advocated to offset or nullify this overwhelming advantage of the service. It has been suggested that the servers be allowed only one delivery in doubles; another suggestion calls for a shortening of the service court, while still another would widen the alleys of the doubles court to make more room for the strikers-out to pass the servers. None of these has had any serious trial as yet, and there is still hope that faster ground-strokes or some new development in defensive play will offset the steadily increasing disadvantage of the strikers-out. The style of Williams in playing the service as it rises may prove to be one solution of the difficulty.

Lobbing to Stop Fast Services

Some years ago, Davis and Ward, then champions of America, developed the lobbing game as a defence against fast service, and they even carried this so far as to produce a lobbing attack by very high lobs under which they ran in to volley. The smashing at that time was too strong for this, however, and Beals Wright developed an excellent answer to the play by let-

ting such high lobs, which fall too straight to be smashed easily, drop to the ground and then smashing them overhead on the second drop of the ball from the bound. This play succeeded so well that it was soon found unprofitable to run in under a high lob.

The English Formation of the Strikers

In England, the Doherty brothers and other leading British pairs in doubles, placed the partner of the striker-out at the service-line, and sometimes still closer up toward the net, while the service was being returned. The success of this manoeuver depends entirely on the severity of the service and first return, and the ability of the server in volleying. This position has always been thought to be unsound in this country because the close position of American volleyers seems to make it an easy matter for the server to volley the ball right "through" the opposing player, as he is caught in too close to anticipate such a quick stroke.

It Has Won Despite Criticism

On the other hand, it has been quite successful abroad, and despite the theoretical unsoundness of the "formation," it has succeeded almost invariably in international matches. The Doherty brothers beat Davis and Ward using this formation; Doust and Jones beat McLoughlin and Hackett in 1913, and Brookes and Wilding beat McLoughlin and Bundy in 1914, the Australians using this position almost invariably.

As an offset to the servers' advantage it cannot be said to equalize matters, although from the deeper English position for volleying, it

Often Carries All Four Into Volleying Duel

frequently carries the play into a general volleying duel, with all four players engaged. If the striker is very severe in his first return, or if he drops the ball short after crossing the net, as Beals Wright used to do so well, he may be able to hold his partner's position safe and ultimately follow up abreast of him to dislodge the opponents from their net position or get into a general volleying rally with fairly even chances to win.

American Formation Works for the Servers

While these efforts to equalize matters have been under way, there have been other plans to fortify the position of the servers. Again Davis and Ward must be credited with the invention of the new theory, and every historian of lawn tennis must recognize in Holcombe Ward one of the most fertile minds that ever worked out the problems of the court. To him belongs the credit of the American twist service which has almost revolutionized the game, the highest art in short cross-court cut volleys and the "American formation" for doubles.

Partner Stands at Centre of Net

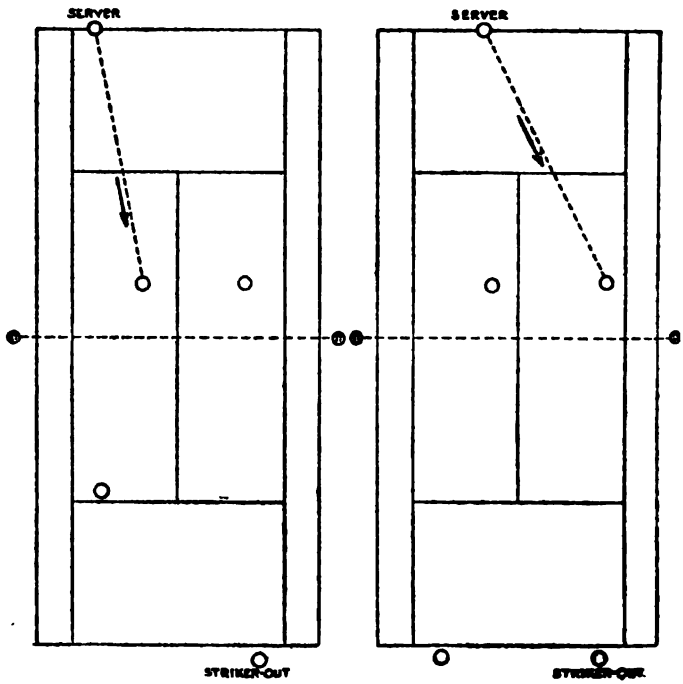
This position simply calls for the partner of the server to stand opposite the middle of the net instead of to one side when his partner is serving. The object of this formation is to embarrass the striker-out, and it is very often successful where the style of play used by the opponents is hampered by this position.

The most effective return of the service has always been a diagonal cross-court drive close to the net, and this return is harder for the server to handle as he runs in than a straight shot

Shuts Out Cross-Court Drive

down the court. The American formation practically shuts out this standard return of the service, as it would be intercepted and killed by the waiting partner, and forces the striker-out to drive straight down the line, unless he would lob

Diagrams Illustrate Both Formations



ENGLISH FORMATION AMERICAN FORMATION

Throws Striker Off Usual Return

or risk a return into the net player's hands. At least it has the tendency to throw him off his customary stroke, and by the mere novelty of the position, if for no other reason, it seems to gain.

The diagonal return of the service across the centre of the net has a distinct advantage for the

striker, because the net is lowest at that point. If this shot can be shut out, the server will force him to lob or play over the higher part of the net.

Wright Says Play Should Be Used Only on One Side

Beals Wright has raised a nice point regarding this play, and his opinion is of great value because he used the formation with Ward frequently in match play. Wright declares that the position should not be used when it forces the server to run in with his backhand toward the alley. The server runs up diagonally instead of straight and he is almost certain to meet the first return while still moving. With a left-handed server, the position should be used only in serving to the right court, according to Wright's idea, and for a right-handed server only in the left court. It is still possible to vary this position by using the regular orthodox formation in the opposite court, and the new style on the side where the server will have his forehand toward the alley.

Handling Doubtful Balls

One point in which team play is most necessary in doubles is in the handling of doubtful balls. Nothing breaks up the work of a pair in doubles so much as for both to let a doubtful ball pass untouched because of a misunderstanding as to which one should have played it; and it is equally disastrous for both to try to hit the same ball. The inevitable conflict generally results in the two rackets clashing, the return failing altogether and two over-strained tempers being ruffled to the detriment of the next play.

It is an excellent rule, which of course must have many exceptions, for the player with his

Forehand Should Be Given Preference

forehand toward the centre to have the preference in handling doubtful balls down the centre. If it is doubtful which player should handle the return, it is generally better for the man who can use his forehand in the play. On handling lobs down the middle, the same rule holds good, but when the direction leans toward the backhand man distinctly, it is better that the man who played the previous stroke should continue the play. After making one volley or smash that has not killed, a player's guage of the range and distance is generally better to correct errors for the next shot, and he is more likely to succeed in his next effort than if the idle player "butts into" the play.

Poaching a Short-sighted Policy

Poaching over on your partner's territory is a short-sighted policy, even though you may be better at the required stroke than the partner. Sooner or later this is certain to prove a losing game, for the adversaries will be able to take advantage of the larger openings left on your own side of the court as a result of trying to reach too far over toward the partner's side.

A Sample of It Illustrated

An illustration of this is shown in one of the plates in this volume in which Touchard is fairly crowding Washburn off into the alley in his effort to smash a ball that should have been played by the other man. If this smash was not an outright kill, the court was wide open to his opponents for the next play.

With a poaching partner at the net against you, even though he be only leaning toward the centre to intercept some cross-court drive, there

How to Fool the Poaching Net Man

is always a splendid attack offered that is too often neglected. At the net, when a man anticipates jumping across sidewise, he stands with his feet parallel with the net and carries his weight on legs spread far apart to make the spring. In this position, it is practically impossible for him to start backward quickly for a lob. The prevailing idea is to pass such a player along his own alley as he deserts it, but often the movement may be only a feint, and he is trying to draw such a shot from you with the intention of dodging back to kill it.

A Low Lob Finds Him "Anchored"

Whether his attempt be a real attempt to poach or a blind, in either case he is prepared only to move sidewise, and the most dangerous of all attacks against him is overhead. If the stroke can be covered so he cannot anticipate it until too late to shift his feet, a low lob is almost always a point winner, and if his partner is also running forward, they will at least have to let the ball bound and play it defensively if it does not win the point outright. This would turn the attack over to your side, which is next best to winning the point outright, so the value of such a strategic stroke can hardly be overestimated.

Driving at the Net Man Poor Tactics

Unless he hangs far back from his correct position, so you can make the ball drop before it reaches him, it is a very unwise policy to drive at the opposing net player in doubles. The chances are all against the success of the play, and even though it does succeed once in a while from the sheer unexpectedness that caused the adversary

to miss the ball, in the long run it is certain to prove a losing game.

Both Partners Get Back Under Lob

When the ball is lobbed over the heads of the players at the net, both should back away equally for the return, the idle player anyway far enough to be certain his partner will not be forced to let it drop and play it defensively. When a lob is allowed to bound, both partners must be back behind it, for this turns the situation to a defensive one and either man will be *hors de combat* if he remains at the net when the opponents rush in to volley.

Rush In if Your Own Lob Is Not Smashed

The instant such a lob is allowed to fall, that must be considered the signal for the successful side that made it to rush forward to assume the aggressive position at the net before the next return reaches them. The most successful teams often try to turn the attack against their antagonists by this manoeuver and when the ball is put up high, they watch the movements of the other men closely for this key to the situation. If the opponents back away to smash, they must stay back to handle the ball from the bound, but at the first sign of their turning to play it defensively they instantly rush forward to seize the attack at the net.

Better Not to Let a Lob Drop

But the best practice is not to let a lobbed ball drop. No matter if you have to back all the way to the base-line to volley it, the advantage is better maintained by volleying it downward than by turning to play it from the bound. The instant the ball has been volleyed from a lob, however, it is necessary to rush back instantly to the net posi-

tion or the next return may come at your feet and the attack be turned in this way.

Quick Recovery on a Deep Lob

This is not difficult when the lob is a comparatively short one, leaving no great distance to run to reassume the net, but when the lob is far back in the court, it requires an instant recovery to get in motion at once. The idle player can start forward before the stroke is made as soon as he is certain that his partner will volley the dropping ball.

Baddeley's Zone Forbidden in Doubles, Too

Baddeley's forbidden zone between the service-line and the base-line is even more vital in doubles than in singles, and good players never come to rest there while the ball is in play.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Do you consider the English position for doubles, with partner of the striker-out at the service-line, to be sound against fast volleyers?

Is the English Formation Sound?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I don't play doubles, I only try.

T. C. BUNDY: Very risky; O. K. if partner has good return to server's feet on the run-in.

K. H. BEHR: If the partner were about seven feet from the net I think in many cases such a position is splendid.

F. B. ALEXANDER: No, but depends entirely on the style of game one is playing against.

R. D. LITTLE: It depends on the service and how fast the server comes in.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: No, as I have seen the foremost English teams driven from this position.

Parke Says He Has Never Seen It

J. C. PARKE: I have never seen the English position as above described. There are only two positions for partner, either right up or right back.

C. P. DIXON: I consider the parallel formation the better; there are less gaps. Either partner of striker-out should be well up or behind base-line in line with the striker-out.

R. L. MURRAY: I do not.

G. M. CHURCH: Not unless the server is slow in running in to the net.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes, except against an exceptional service, provided the striker-out is reasonably good off the ground.

ELIA FOTTRELL: No, especially against a difficult service.

CLARENCE HOBART: No.

Dewhurst Thinks It Sound

E. B. DEWHURST: Yes, if only the return is good enough. We are bad over here, hence must stay back.

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

C. R. GARDNER: No.

A. S. DABNEY: No.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: No, but they seem to get away with it admirably.

F. C. INMAN: Not entirely, depends on service, but good chance to take at times to win their service.

W. F. JOHNSON: No.

N. W. NILES: With a sharp, quick return of the service, yes. It tends to force the man coming in to try for an ace right off, whereas otherwise he could block, get in good position for an ace on the second shot, with better chance of success.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

Large Majority Against It

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, but it requires exceptional brilliancy on the part of the partner of the striker-out.

A. M. SQUAIR: No.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Very rarely.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: No, think it will lose, other things equal.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: Not against fast, aggressive volleyers.

R. C. SEAVER: No.

G. C. SHAFER: No.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

E. H. WHITNEY: No.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: No.

Is there any advantage in the American position, with the partner of the server always in the centre of the net? If so, what is the advantage?

Has American Formation Advantages?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I don't play doubles, I only try.

T. C. BUNDY: Can be varied to advantage against some players.

K. H. BEHR: It breaks the average steady doubles shot, and also breaks the usual low drop shots, a variation is always superior.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Believe in mixing positions up. Stops a cross-court drive; depends on style of game one is playing.

R. D. LITTLE: No, often a disadvantage.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes, it will sometimes interfere with a favorite and difficult return.

Wright Explains Common Error

B. C. WRIGHT: About nine-tenths play the position incorrectly. It should not be played when the server has to cover the alley with his backhand as he is weaker and has less reach. Placing of service counts in this attack.

J. C. PARKE: I have not seen this American position either, except as a change to cover a particularly good centre-return.

C. P. DIXON: I am not prepared to say that there are no advantages in this system. As a rule, however, I incline to think the English positions stronger.

R. L. MURRAY: I am not an expert on the doubles game or the singles either for that matter.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes. It makes the striker play the ball straight down the line and it crosses the net where it is three feet six inches high. But this position also has a great disadvantage in that the server has to run further to reach the net and most returns will make him volley up. I do not consider it the correct position.

Lob Over Net Man Will Break It Up

W. M. WASHBURN: When used occasionally, it may disconcert the opponents.

E. B. DEWHURST: None that I can see. The lob over the head of the net man will break up this position every time.

C. R. GARDNER: Against some teams possibly, and much depends on your partner's serve.

A. S. DABNEY: Two men at the net better than one.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: It prevents a sharp cross-court shot.

Many Experts Favor It

F. C. INMAN: Often found it to advantage; depends on opponents.

W. F. JOHNSON: It would seem so.

N. W. NILES: There is a temporary advantage in a change to the above position, I believe. It forces the opponents to make a return of the service which he is not accustomed to, also forces a very difficult cross-court return to prevent ruling off a large part of the court. However, it is a formation which makes lobs more effective.

T. R. PELL: No advantages.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes, properly used; it breaks up many striker-out's favorite strokes.

Stops Cross-Court Shots Over Low Centre of Net

A. M. SQUAIR: An advantage very frequently against players who depend largely upon cross-court shots. A mixture so that each plays on the same side of the court throughout is very often good, as some players volley and smash better from one side than from the other.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I don't consider the position good.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: No advantage, to my mind.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

W. M. HALL: Yes, checks cross-court driving, usually easiest for receiver.

RICHARD HARTE: Because there is less chance for the receiver to make passing shot.

DEAN MATHEY: It precludes the accustomed cross-court "groove" shot.

Worries Opponents, Says Seaver

R. C. SEAVER: It worries the opponents, by having someone get so close up and the prospect of the other man running right up.

G. C. SHAFER: No.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes, makes striker-out play cross-court shot most every time.

E. H. WHITNEY: It narrows the area in which the striker-out can return the ball. It doesn't give him such a good opportunity to take the net either unless he is an exceptionally good half-volleyer.

I. C. WRIGHT: The court is covered better.

Would limiting the server to one ball, cutting off the second service, in doubles only, stop the present advantage of the serving side?

Should Second Service Be Cut Out?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I don't play doubles, I only try.

T. C. BUNDY: No.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Men with good ground strokes have no trouble in breaking through now; why change and demoralize the game?

R. D. LITTLE: The service would still be an advantage, but not an improper one as it now is.

H. H. HACKETT: Only to a certain extent. I believe a great many of the best doubles players would be as successful with one service as two.

B. C. WRIGHT: To a great extent because the receiver could get well set.

Behr, Little and Wright Think It Would Help

J. C. PARKE: It might be worth testing.

C. P. DIXON: I think it would minimize this advantage if only to a small extent.

R. L. MURRAY: It would be all right but don't they deserve the advantage if they can serve well enough?

G. M. CHURCH: Yes, to some extent at least, but not as much as many suppose.

W. M. WASHBURN: In part.

ELIA FOTTRELL: It would to a certain extent.

CLARENCE HOBART: Yes, am very much in favor of trying it.

E. B. DEWHURST: Too radical. Better to make the service harder by shortening the court.

J. R. STRACHAN: I don't think so. Most points are played off the first ball.

C. R. GARDNER: Somewhat.

A. S. DABNEY: No; the servers would still hold the net as an attacking position, even if the server's serve was so weak as merely to put the ball in play.

Many Others Against Change

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I should think it would.

F. C. INMAN: Not to any great extent. Servers can still take net position.

W. F. JOHNSON: To a marked degree.

N. W. NILES: An appreciable part of it.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: It might, but it would be a retrogression in the game.

A. M. SQUAIR: To some extent, but not entirely. The most important advantage (position at the net) would remain.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Naturally it would lessen it greatly.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Both absurd ideas.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.

Hall Thinks Receivers Would Be Too Strong

W. M. HALL: Yes, think it would throw advantage to receivers.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes, to a degree.

DEAN MATHEY: Of course, to a great extent.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes, I think so.

G. C. SHAFER: Somewhat, but not entirely.

S. H. VOSHELL: No.

E. H. WHITNEY: I don't think it would make any material difference.

I. C. WRIGHT: No.

W. C. GRANT: Yes.

Would it have the same effect to widen the alleys of the doubles court from four and a half to six feet?

Would It Do to Widen the Alleys?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: I don't play doubles, I only try.

K. H. BEHR: Yes, but I would not advise such a change.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Leave well enough alone.

R. D. LITTLE: No, this would take very little from the server's advantage but would probably decrease lobbing.

H. H. HACKETT: It might help a great deal more. I never tried it.

Wright Favors This, Too, But Not Both

B. C. WRIGHT: To widen the alleys I believe in, as it would give the receiver an advantage, but one service and alleys widened as well would be too much.

J. C. PARKE: No, I am against any alteration in the measurements of the court.

C. P. DIXON: Offhand, I don't think this would make much difference, but should like to try a few sets with the alteration in force, before committing myself to a definite opinion.

Many Different Opinions on This

R. L. MURRAY: No, I do not think the latter would have as much effect.

G. M. CHURCH: I think so.

W. M. WASHBURN: Not so much.

ELIA FOTTRELL: No.

CLARENCE HOBART: Possibly, don't like the idea.

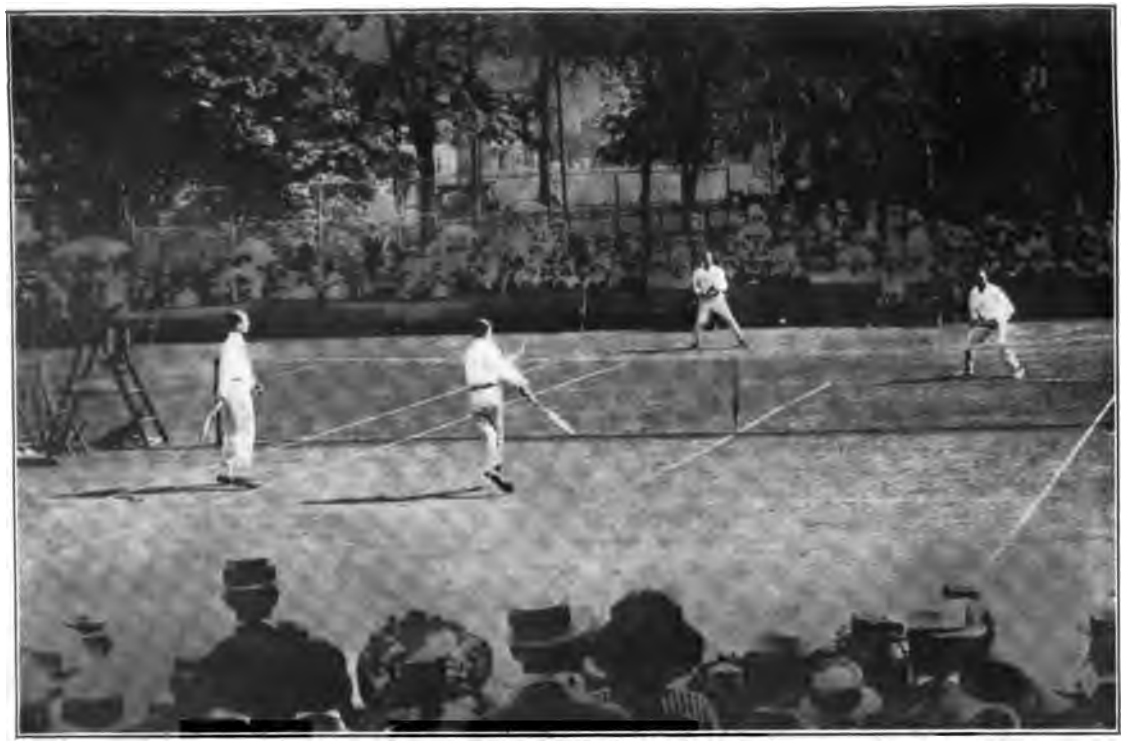
E. B. DEWHURST: This would of course help the strikers.

J. R. STRACHAN: It would put the server at a disadvantage.

C. R. GARDNER: I should think so.

A. S. DABNEY: This would lessen the advantage to a certain degree.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Probably, but it would tend



WASHBURN TOUCHARD LARNED WRIGHT

Bad Team-Play in Doubles.

This view of the final of the Eastern Championship doubles at Longwood in 1913 shows a fine example of poor team-play. Touchard is shown here crowding his partner almost off the court in order to smash a ball that Washburn should have handled. If the smash failed to kill the ball, the court would have been wide open for a pass on the next return.

McLOUGHLIN DOUST

Volleying from the Service-Line.

In the International singles of 1913, Stanley Doust met McLoughlin and was beaten in straight sets. One reason for his defeat is shown in this picture. Doust tried to volley from the service-line and the American dropped his ground-strokes with so much top-spin that he was constantly forced to volley up.

to shorten the long rallies which are the chief joy of doubles.

F. C. INMAN: No.

W. F. JOHNSON: It would be an advantage but not so great as the single service.

Scheme Tried at Seabright

N. W. NILES: This unquestionably would make it more difficult for the side serving to win its game. Very hard to say how much. At Seabright a couple of years ago, this was tried and it didn't seem to make as much difference as expected. Probably because we were not accustomed to it and couldn't properly make use of the advantage.

ROBERT LEROY: This would be better, it is now practically impossible to "alley" a good volleying pair consistently.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes, this would tend to reduce the server's advantage.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I should think so, approximately.

Some Think Strikers Would Have Advantage

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Absurd.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: No; widening it to six feet would give the receiving side the advantage.

W. M. HALL: Probably would.

RICHARD HARTE: No.

DEAN MATHEY: I think so.

G. C. SHAFER: Somewhat, but the serving side gets the attack, which in doubles is a great advantage.

S. H. VOSHELL: Don't think so; never tried it.

E. H. WHITNEY: Such a change would take away some of the advantage that the serving side now enjoys. I should not advise it, however.

I. C. WRIGHT: Leave it as it is.

W. C. GRANT: No.

XVII.

MIXED DOUBLES

Mixed Doubles Different from Other Games

MIXED DOUBLES is a branch of the game which calls for some principles very different from those used in either singles or men's doubles. The same methods of play that are used in other doubles do not hold good and cannot be brought into use because of the inequality of the two partners in this kind of a game.

The principle of the weaker link of a chain applies very strongly here, and it is very difficult to prevent the opposing players from selecting the woman on your side of the net for attack and by directing their strokes at her, to reduce the opposing strength to the level of the woman's game.

Woman Must Play at the Net

To prevent this only one way seems practicable, and that is to get the woman up to the net at the first opportunity and then to direct your strokes, if you be the man partner, so as to support her in that position where she can be of the most value to her team.

I know that this is not, or at any rate was not until recently, considered good tactics in England, and I have seen the English players reverse this campaign with the man at the net, trying to "poach" across from side to side and make up by his quickness in volleying for his tactically poor

position to support his partner. With a net thirty-six feet wide to defend and the great risk that he will be caught in the centre with openings at each side where he can be passed, only one of which his partner can hope to cover, this plan seems almost suicidal. It would be difficult for such a game to win against an equal combination of the other style, with a clever masculine opponent who would almost certainly keep the ball out of the man's reach, and require the woman on the other side of the net to do all of the work.

English Prefer Man at the Net

It is interesting to note that both Parke and Dixon, the two English leaders whose expert opinions follow, favor the American method of play. Yet when I advocated this position in another book ten years ago, English authorities ridiculed the idea.

Parke and Dixon Have Come to American Ideas

The English position for volleying from back near the service-line helps their "formation" somewhat, as the man can cover more ground from side to side in this position, and also forestall any attempt to lob him away from the net. But the same old question of defensive underhand lifting volleys comes up again here, and to American eyes they seem a poor substitute even in mixed doubles for aggressive ground-strokes or sharp killing volleys from close to the net.

By all means, the woman is more valuable to her side at the net and the man at the back of his court, unless he can work his way in and support his partner in the volleying position, when both might hold the attack safely together. The difficulty is in getting the woman up to the net safely.

Man Can Sometimes Join Partner at Net

When her man partner serves, there is no question but that her place is at the net and she can take up her stand there before the ball is put into play. Similarly, when he is the striker-out, she can take the same position safely and he can support her by his first return.

Difficult to Get There When She Serves

But when the woman serves and when she is the striker, I believe that the man's place is at the middle of the base-line to cover any return that the other side can make. For the dangerous run that the woman must make toward the net without being caught half way up with the ball at her feet, a strategic stroke must be made that will give her the needed time, and this is not always afforded by the return of the adversaries. If both of the opponents are back in their court, perhaps the safest way to secure the desired position is to drive deep into the woman's corner on the other side and have your partner run up behind this drive.

Woman Should Cross Over Sometimes

If the other woman is on the same side of the court as your partner, this can be done at the first opening, but if they are diagonally opposite, it is always safer to have her cross over to the side opposite her woman opponent, and then make the run to the net on the first deep drive into the woman's corner. If the woman on the other side is playing at the net, this chance is not open, and the next alternative is to lob deep over the woman's head and your partner can then run in under this lob unless the man on the other side is an exceptionally good smasher, when it might be dangerous to lob at all. However that may be,

one of these two devices should be used and manoeuvered for until your partner can reach the net safely, after which a new situation presents itself.

With Both Women at Net, Better Tennis Wins

With the woman at the net, I believe that the tactical position is sound, and if the other woman has also reached the net, then it is a matter of better tennis on even terms or better strategy that ought to win. With the woman against you at the base-line and your partner at the net, the odds are all in your favor, of course, so long as you can prevent the opposing woman from running in. Unless she be exceptionally clever at passing, a deep drive into her corner ought to let you follow it up safely, and with both yourself and your partner at the net together, victory is almost certain with the ball kept on the woman's side of the court, and about even if the opposing man gets a chance at the play.

Men Drive Diagonally to Each Other

With both women in the volleying position, the play between the two men generally is diagonally across the court, and it should be the aim of the clever player to keep his drives well over in front of his partner, so that from her position she will be able to cover as much territory as possible. To play to the other corner leaves the "open diagonal" of the court wide open and limits the partner's usefulness to covering a very small sector of the court.

A Variation With a Lob

When the opponent follows the same tactics and simply tries to outdrive you, a splendid variation is to work him far out to the outside of his court to meet a diagonal drive and then to lob

Often Drives Opponents Out of Position

deep and low over his partner's head and follow the play up to the net. The effect of this play is to bring the man on the other side directly behind his partner leaving them doubled up and the other side of the court entirely unguarded.

If you follow this play up to the net quickly, the court will be wide open for a kill and nothing but a lob or a brilliant passing stroke will save the other side from losing. The greatest danger of this play is that the man opponent will be able to cross quickly enough to smash, but if the lob is low and well placed to the side of the court he will find it very difficult to get there in time, especially if he was far over to the other side before.

Have Partner Cross Under Lob

I have found it a splendid variation to have my own partner cross the court under this lob. Let us follow this play and see how its works out. Both women are at the net and the men diagonally opposite each other back and driving deep. In your right corner, you lob deep and low straight down the right alley over the opposing woman's head and call to your partner to cross over under the lob. The man on the other side must cross over to handle the lob and will probably have to play it off the ground, so you can cross over at the base-line as soon as your partner has safely crossed at the net. Unless the woman on the other side also crosses she will be hopelessly out of the play and the entire right side (the left as you face them) of your opponents' court will be wide open for your next return.

Leaves Court Open for a Kill

There are many other variations of play for mixed doubles, but success in this game depends

largely on getting your woman partner up to the net, and keeping her there safely so her position covers as much of the court as possible. Naturally, the woman who volleys well is much the stronger partner, and to select one who volleys badly is to court defeat.

Success Hangs On Getting Woman Up to Net

The service is a big advantage in mixed doubles, and the man should always serve first as he ought to win his own service game seventy per cent. of the time with evenly matched teams. The struggle usually develops around the winning of the games in which the women serve and both of the men are expected to win their own service games.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Should the woman in mixed doubles play at the net or the base-line?

Should Woman Play at the Net?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Net.

T. C. BUNDY: At the net if she can volley at all.

K. H. BEHR: At net.

F. B. ALEXANDER: I should worry!

R. D. LITTLE: At the net if she is able.

H. H. HACKETT: I don't qualify at this branch of the game.

B. C. WRIGHT: At the net and rather close.

J. C. PARKE: At the net if she can volley, and if she can't volley, then at the net and let her learn.

English Combinations Find This an Advantage

C. P. DIXON: The combinations over here with the lady at the net have done wonderfully well, and show that if the lady is only a fair volleyer, the advantage is with them.

R. L. MURRAY: At the net if she can.

G. M. CHURCH: At the net.

W. M. WASHBURN: At the net if she can volley; otherwise not.

ELIA FOTTRELL: At the net.

CLARENCE HOBART: Net, if she is any good there.

E. B. DEWHURST: Wherever she is best.

J. R. STRACHAN: At the net.

C. R. GARDNER: If she can volley, at the net. Much depends on what the opponents are sending over to her.

A. S. DABNEY: Base-line unless an exceptionally good volleyer.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Net is usually better.

F. C. INMAN: Base-line.

W. F. JOHNSON: At the net.

N. W. NILES: At the net if she can volley or keep

Niles Mixes Gallantry With Tennis

from being hit by her opponents' drives; this merely as against being placed there by her partner with the hope that their opponents will, for fear of hurting her, refrain from shooting fast drives her way. In either case, if tactics work out as planned, I believe a very unfair advantage is taken as, of course, a strip of court is deliberately ruled off from play. If her partner's service is such that it can be returned with speed and is driven, as it should be, at or near her standing at the net, and she consistently missing, is in danger of being hit, I believe it is her partner's duty to put her back on the base-line rather than trust that the opposing side, seeing her danger, will change the direction of their shots.

T. R. PELL: Net.

Nearly All Favor Net Position

ROBERT LEROY: I don't know. As a general thing, I should say at the base-line in the left-hand corner.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes, if she is at all used to net play.

G. F. TOUCHARD: At the net, if she is able to volley at all.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: At net, if able; few are able.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Net.

W. M. HALL: At net, if any good there at all.

RICHARD HARTE: It depends on the woman; if she can play net and volley to the opposite woman well, it gives one at once a very strong position.

"Depends on the Dame," Says Mathey

DEAN MATHEY: Depends upon the dame you are playing with. Ordinarily, I would say right on top of the net.

R. C. SEAVER: At the net, if possible, always.

G. C. SHAFER: At net.

S. H. VOSHELL: Always at the net.

E. H. WHITNEY: This, of course, depends entirely on the ability of the woman. Ordinarily I should by all means advocate the playing of the woman at the net. The very fact that she is at the net disconcerts the opposing players. He has at least to try to keep the ball away from her. This is sometimes easy enough to do but it is not so easy as playing the ball back anywhere,

which can be done if the lady is not at the net.

I. C. WRIGHT: Net, if she is equal to it. Few are, however.

W. C. GRANT: She should play net.

Should a man in high-class mixed doubles ease up on his service for the opposing woman?

Should Woman Get Easier Service?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No, No, No.

T. C. BUNDY: No; it's more or less an insult to the opponents.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Are you playing ping pong or tennis?

R. D. LITTLE: No.

H. H. HACKETT: No.

B. C. WRIGHT: Certainly not.

J. C. PARKE: Rubbish.

C. P. DIXON: Why should he?

R. L. MURRAY: Certainly, if necessary to win.

Nearly All Agree That He Should Not

G. M. CHURCH: I don't think he should in very high-class mixed doubles.

W. M. WASHBURN: No.

ELIA FOTTRELL: No.

CLARENCE HOBART: Of course not.

E. B. DEWHURST: Why? Is he out to win or to be polite? When he eases up on the opposite lady, he puts his own partner in bad.

J. R. STRACHAN: Not in high-class play.

C. R. GARDNER: No. His duty is to use all his powers to win for his partner's sake, if not for his own.

A. S. DABNEY: No, if he did it would be a question of ethics, and that plays no part in a game where a man is trying to deliver his best strokes which still preserve perfect fairness and sportsmanship.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: No.

F. C. INMAN: No.

W. F. JOHNSON: No.

Harte and Whitney Differ from the Others

N. W. NILES: No.
T. R. PELL: No.
ROBERT LEROY: No.
A. M. SQUAIR: No.
G. F. TOUCHARD: No.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: He should *not*.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: No.
W. M. HALL: No.
RICHARD HARTE: Yes, by all means.
DEAN MATHEY: No.
R. C. SEAVER: No.
G. C. SHAFER: No.
S. H. VOSHELL: No.
E. H. WHITNEY: Yes, a little.
I. C. WRIGHT: If at a house party.
W. C. GRANT: Certainly not. It is part of the game and is perfectly fair.

XVIII.

ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

Healthy Respect for an Honorable Opponent

THERE IS NOT another sport in the whole category that develops and brings out a more healthy respect for an honorable opponent than lawn tennis. One is in such close personal relation with the adversary all the time during match play, that he is certain to learn a great deal of the character of the man he is opposing during the course of a few sets. And when the match is over the manner in which he meets you, whether you be a winner or a loser, will shed some further light on the subject.

Learning Something from the Other Man

If you have been playing against a stranger, it is a safe guess that you have learned something new from him and he something from you by the time the game is over. You may have beaten him badly, but in all the great variety of strokes that he has played during those three or four sets, there were surely some of them that were new to you, or played in a manner that was different from what you had seen before. If you have learned nothing new from his play, he must have been a very inferior player or you a very poor observer.

After twenty years of tournament play, I found that I seldom played a match without learning something new from my opponent's style of hitting the ball. The ability to learn and gain

from observation of others' play is of inestimable value to any ambitious tennis player, and all should cultivate it.

Win or Lose, There Should Be No Rancour

At the end of even the closest match, no matter if it has been lost by the merest fluke, there should be no feeling of rancour on the part of either the winner or the loser, if the match has been played honorably. No one can win all of the time, and it does the best players a world of good to be beaten occasionally. It teaches them fresh ideas, gives them new incentives and ambitions. Furthermore, there is no interest in any game if you are always the winner; when the result is a foregone conclusion, it is almost unnecessary and generally uninteresting to play the match.

The Few Backsliders Ostracised

But there are occasional times when an adversary cannot be considered an honorable opponent and then it requires the greatest self-control to lose gracefully. Fortunately, such players are exceedingly rare in lawn tennis, because of the spirit of honor that pervades its players and the quick ostracism that has followed the few backsliders who have fallen from grace.

One Man's Method of Winning

Not very many years ago, I remember hearing a certain man who was very far from popular, explain how he came to beat another player who was always thought to be considerably better than he. Amazed at the result, some of us were asking how he came to beat this man, and his reply was: "Oh, I managed to throw him off his game in several ways. His service was the hardest thing to handle, but every once in a while when he got them in too fast for me, I would just hold up my

hand and say 'Not ready!' and make him serve it over again."

Minor Ways of Dishonesty

Now, this may be an exaggerated case, but there are a number of such minor ways of dishonesty in which the technical rules of the game can be beaten. Not being ready for the service is one, for no umpire can insist that you were ready; claiming a "let" for some imaginary interference is another, but the umpire has better control over this infraction; calling out loudly to disconcert an opponent as he is about to smash is another adopted by some players who lack the respect of their contemporaries.

An Instance of Bad Methods

I well remember another instance of this kind which occurred when I was playing an important tournament match against the same player whose transgression was cited before. I got within one stroke of victory and he tossed a short lob, which seemed certain to be killed. In sheer desperation, my opponent shouted out as the ball was falling close to the net, "He'll miss it, he'll miss it!" as loud as he could, with the desired effect, for I did miss the smash as a result, although the trick did not ultimately save the match for him.

Not Fair to Hurry Opponents

It is considered not only fair and generous but required by the ethics of the game that the opponent be given ample time to prepare, even to shift position if he wishes, between the delivery of the first and second services, and if your opponent tries to hurry you unreasonably in this regard, you are fully entitled to hold up your hand

to show you were not ready for the second service and make him deliver it again.

You Are Entitled to Play Deliberately

In the same way, you are entitled to walk back to position with reasonable deliberateness at the end of a rally before taking the next service, and your opponent should not be allowed to force you to hurry when he finds perhaps that you are out of breath. This is one of the sly tricks that are sometimes attempted by a few players of doubtful ethics, but they are easily checked by a demand for reasonable preparation before each service is delivered. The honorable player will not take advantage, on the other hand, of either of these unquestionable rights. To do that would be just as bad as the other extreme.

Knocking Back Idle Balls

One should be courteous also in knocking idle balls directly back to his opponent, not in his general direction so that he will have to walk a little extra distance each time to get balls to serve. I have seen players sometimes sullenly knock the balls back to the other side of the court without the slightest regard for the other man, when a little ordinary courtesy would have dictated a better direction.

Some Doubtful Points in Ethics

But such instances are rare, and the etiquette of lawn tennis is pretty well understood by all of its players and lived up to religiously as a matter of personal honor and honesty. Nevertheless, there are a host of fine points that often come up to trouble the conscience of a man during match play and a frank discussion of the doubtful points is certain to make the conditions surrounding tournaments more equal.

Lob in the Sun if the Other Man Does

For instance, I asked one of the best players in the country not long ago if he considered it fair to intentionally lob in the face of the sun, so that his adversary might have the disadvantage of facing it, and make his smashing more difficult. His reply was: "I do, if the other fellow does."

This State of Mind Bothers Many

Here is a state of mind that bothers many players; they are not certain whether their conscience approves of certain questionable things during match play, but if the antagonist uses these means they would follow suit. This leaves the matter in a debatable state, so that either might refrain from the same ruse and accuse the other afterward of taking an unfair advantage.

Most Tournament Players Frankly Do So

On this particular point, nearly all tournament players consider it perfectly legitimate to take advantage of the position of the sun. Even the rules themselves have been framed to equalize this advantage, for you will find that the rule governing the changing of sides during a set requires that never more than two games in succession shall be played from the same side of the net, and any advantage that may accrue from having the sun or wind at the back will be divided as equally as possible. The rules go even further than this, and prevent two successive games after deuce in any set from being played from the same side, by requiring the players to change sides after the odd instead of the even games. This is the reason that this rule was framed as it is, so that neither player should have any distinct advantage due to the wind or sun or other court

conditions, for the necessary two games in succession after the score had reached five-all, six-all, or any other deuce point in the set. A set cannot be won, therefore, because of such conditions, although a game can.

Entitled to Advantage of Sun or Wind

Frankly, most of the best tournament players do take advantage of the sun and the wind whenever possible. When their back is toward the sun, they lob more often than when facing it, so as to gain by their adversary's inability to smash with the sun in his eyes. They drive with the wind and lob against it, if they consider that good tactics; the ethics of these tactics are generally considered to be good.

Other Weak Points Always Attacked

Certainly, every player selects the weakest point in his opponent's armour of strokes for attack, and no one questions his right to do so. If he smashes poorly, the wise tournament player feeds lobs to him; if his backhand stroke is weak or erratic, he is given the ball on this side, and if he is poor at volleying or playing off the ground, a distinct effort is made to force him into that part of the court where he will have to play the strokes he is least expert in.

Playing to Tire Out the Adversary

Another fine point in ethics comes up in taking advantage of the physical condition of an adversary. Your opponent may be out of condition when a match starts and you may soon learn of this advantage you hold over him; or he may start fit and become more exhausted by his play than you who have husbanded your strength better. Under these conditions, how far is it permissible to deliberately "play for his wind"—that

is, to play to win by endurance rather than superiority of strokes?

The Case of Doherty vs. Ward

As in the question of lobbing against the sun, a great majority of the tournament experts feel that this is perfectly legitimate, and it would clear the atmosphere, I feel, to have this free discussion of the matter so that none of the others should be held back from taking the same advantage when it offers. When Holcombe Ward met H. L. Doherty in the Davis Cup International matches at Wimbledon in 1905, he captured the first two sets by fast rushing to the net and volleying the returns of the English champion. Doherty, however, believed that he could not keep up this steady rushing and must soon "shoot his bolt," so he played well within himself, waiting for the American to "crack." His plan succeeded, as history shows to the regret of the American hopes for International supremacy that year, for after the first two sets, Ward was exhausted and could not physically keep up the gruelling net-rushing, with the result that Doherty won the next three sets in comparatively easy fashion, on better physical condition, although clearly outplayed in the first two.

Exhaustion Beat the American

Wise Generalship to Husband Your Strength

It is considered perfectly legitimate to make use of such an advantage, and wise generalship to husband your strength for the endurance test at the first sign of physical distress on the part of the adversary. In the final round at Newport some years ago, I found it impossible to lob with safety against Dwight Davis during the early part of the match. As the struggle drew out to a fifth

Big Men Tire in Long Matches

set, however, physical condition began to count. My opponent was a very heavy man who felt the strain more than I did, so I played safe, with the result that toward the end of the match I could lob with perfect safety, as Davis was unable to smash successfully after he tired. That weakness saved the match for me; physical condition turned the tables in my favor, just as it reversed the result the next day in the challenge round against Whitman.

Deception in Play Perfectly Legitimate

Some question has been raised as to just how far lawn tennis players should resort to deception —that is, deception regarding intentions in play, in direction of strokes, in motions of the arms, body or racket, and in counter deceptions to offset such deceit. Little carries this to the extreme in his theories, and his book dwells constantly on the fine points raised by these tactics. Personally, I feel that this is a perfectly legitimate part of the strategy of the game, and perhaps the highest point of skill among the most expert players. If all deception were omitted, the mere making of strokes would become much more mechanical, and much of the variety would be taken from the game. Possibly, Little may dwell too much on the element of deception in strategy, but I am a firm believer in its value and legitimacy.

How Far Should Deception Be Carried?

How far will good ethics permit this deception in play to be carried? Certainly, beyond the use of shifting the eyes, beyond "covering" the direction of a stroke by false motions, beyond dodging to one side or another to deceive an adversary as to your position, to your shifting posi-

tion when his eyes are on the ball and unable to follow your movements, and to other similar means of keeping the enemy in doubt of your intentions, or better yet, wrongly informed. Should it include such a device as stamping on the ground to imitate a quick move when an opponent is looking up to smash a lob? Beals Wright used to use this maneuver successfully, and I do not remember ever hearing it criticized.

Serving to the Woman in Mixed Doubles

Two fine points in etiquette naturally come up for approval or disapproval that are surely within the doubtful limits. Should a man player serve or smash or drive as hard as possible toward a woman opponent? It is not unusual in mixed doubles for the man to moderate his service a trifle in serving to his woman antagonist, but this is not always done, particularly when the women in the match are of the highest class. Still it is done often even among players of this class. It seems to be a matter of courtesy rather than ethics, but it is always a doubtful matter in tournament play, and sometimes causes bad feeling when the man on one side of the net uses this advantage and the other does not. Expert women players sometimes resent the slight of inferiority and I have known them to take the other view.

Attacking the Woman Opponent

The same question comes up in mixed doubles when the man has an opportunity to score by keeping the woman on the other side of the net constantly under fire, and by avoiding the attack of her man partner, manages to win the match. Some players feel it a matter of good ethics in mixed doubles to divide the attack with fair

equality, directing a full share of it toward the man opponent, but as a rule tournament experts play to win in mixed doubles as in the other branches of the game.

The Question of Postponing Matches

The rules are very specific and all decisions have been consistent in refusing to postpone a match because one of the contesting players was injured during it, and there is a strong feeling that advantage should not be taken of the discretionary power in the referee's hands by which a player can gain a short respite in case of a fall or injury to himself, his racket or his clothes. The rules also are very precise as to the resting period between sets, but there has been a good deal of carelessness in enforcing this provision, except in the championship matches.

Delay Should Not Be Granted for Rest

It is apparent that if one player is more exhausted by the severity of the play than the other, a longer resting period than the rules allow will equalize this disadvantage, and since it is legitimate to play for this advantage, it is certainly wrong to try to offset it by unlawful means such as extending the period for rest between the sets. The ethics of this side of the game are rather clear in that once the match has been started, it should be played through to its conclusion without further interruption than a strict interpretation of the rules permits. Breaking a racket, injury from a fall or collision or any similar accident should not be allowed to offset any advantage that the opponent has secured in the score or in better physical condition.

Before the match begins, however, a differ-

ent situation arises, and most players are reluctant to force an adversary who is sick or incapacitated to begin a scheduled match in order to secure a hollow victory. Just as the U. S. N. L. T. A. refused to challenge for the Davis Cup this year because the British players, both Australian and English, were tied up on account of the war; in the same spirit that made the American polo team last year volunteer a postponement to the British Challengers for the International Polo Cup when one of their best players was hurt in practice only a day or two before play was to begin; in just this same spirit of good sportsmanship, lawn tennis players do not want to force an adversary to start a match under conditions of great temporary inequality. But there must be some limit to such indulgences and some rules to draw the line, so once a match is started, it is the invariable rule that it must be played out to the end or defaulted if one player is incapacitated.

Refusing to Take a Hollow Victory

A test case of this came up some years ago in the challenge round for the women's national championship, when Miss Marie Cahill, the champion, suddenly had a cramp in her leg in the middle of the challenge round for her title. She refused to continue play, and the committee very rightfully insisted on defaulting her title to the challenger, despite the protests of Miss Cahill.

A Test Case of Postponement

When should a let be claimed? This is a nice point that hangs very much on the conscience of the player. The rules state very clearly under what circumstances a let shall be allowed, but most umpires are inclined to take the word of a

When Should a Let Be Claimed?

player claiming to have a point played over again.

Never Try for Point and Then Claim a Let

If you were clearly interfered with by a passing spectator or other outside influences that are recognized by the rules, you are entitled to make the claim, but it is the worst of all ethics to try for a point and losing it, then to make a claim that the point should be played over again. If convinced that you are entitled to replay the point, stop at once, making the claim before you lay yourself open to the accusation of trying to get two chances to win the same point.

Such cases do not come up often in tournament play because outside influences are kept from interfering with the players, but the ethics of the game are just as important in practice play as in big matches where there are umpires to decide such doubtful questions.

Ethics as Important in Practice as Match Play

One of the most difficult points for all players to decide in the ethical side of the game is how to take a wrong decision of an umpire on questions of fact. We find occasionally the type of player who is quick to take advantage of every decision in his favor, right or wrong, and to instantly dispute the umpire, even to appeal to outsiders or his opponent, when he thinks an error has been made. Such men soon find themselves unpopular among the other players, and ostracism is sometimes the only way to cure them of their disagreeable traits.

How Should One Take an Umpire's Wrong Decision?

The broad-minded player usually takes the view that the umpire is honest and doing the best he can; he knows that he is fallible like any other human being, and he hopes that the errors he may

make during a match will even themselves up in the long run.

Most Embarrassing When in Your Favor

To be put in the position of seeing a doubtful or clearly wrong decision in your own favor is perhaps the most unpleasant, and this calls for generosity or diplomacy. Your diplomatic opponent in these circumstances invariably has not seen the ball strike and is perfectly willing to abide by whatever the umpire thinks, since he knows it is in his favor, but your honorable antagonist gives up the point. I have seen many remarkable instances of generous opponents who refused to take advantage of such an error but who were broad enough not to embarrass the umpire by openly reversing his decision.

A Sample of Fine Sportsmanship

One ex-champion got the benefit of a wrong decision at the critical part of a big Newport match some years ago, but before he allowed the point to be recorded in his favor, he called to his opponent:

"Was that good?"

"I couldn't be sure; it looked out to me," from the antagonist.

"Are you sure that ball was good, Mr. Umpire?"

"It looked good to me," from the umpire.

A moment's hesitation and then the ex-champion went back to his base-line and served a double fault. And his opponent knew instantly that he had thrown the next point away intentionally, for he spoke of it after the match.

That is the spirit of true sportsmanship that shows the highest ethics in the game, I take it.

Highest Ethics of the Game

Such instances, and there are plenty of them on record, demonstrate the broad character that develops from the spirit of fair play that lawn tennis breeds.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

Do you consider it good ethics to lob in the face of the sun?

Should You Lob in Face of the Sun?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.

T. C. BUNDY: Lob when that would be the natural return if there were no sun.

K. H. BEHR: Yes, if the other man does.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.

R. D. LITTLE: Certainly.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

J. C. PARKE: Certainly.

C. P. DIXON: In a match, yes.

R. L. MURRAY: No, unless there is no other play possible.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: No, only when forced to.

CLARENCE HOBART: Of course.

Nearly All Agree That You Should

E. B. DEWHURST: Are you trying to win the match or not? It is nicer to hit the other man off the court, but still without some exercise of intelligence the "brains" person could never beat the "brawn" gentleman.

J. R. STRACHAN: No.

C. R. GARDNER: No, but in some cases necessary.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.

F. C. INMAN: Yes, but seldom happens; most tournament courts are faced correctly.

N. W. NILES: Yes.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I do.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Yes.

Harte Says Play as if There Were No Sun

RICHARD HARTE: No; play as you would were there no sun.

DEAN MATHEY: Yes.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Certainly.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

W. C. GRANT: It is a fair advantage; your opponent has the same advantage.

Do you consider it good ethics to lob persistently to an opponent when he is off in smashing?

Should You Lob to a Bad Smasher?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: No.

T. C. BUNDY: Yes, indeed, if a match.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.

R. D. LITTLE: Certainly.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

J. C. PARKE: Certainly.

C. P. DIXON: Certainly.

R. L. MURRAY: O. K.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.

Again, the Experts Agree, Williams Dissenting

CLARENCE HOBART: Of course.

E. B. DEWHURST: Same as to the question about lobbing in the face of the sun.

J. R. STRACHAN: Yes.

C. R. GARDNER: Yes, the same as putting chop on a ball if he hates chops.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.

F. C. INMAN: Yes.

Champion's is the Only Negative Answer

N. W. NILES: Yes. In playing to win, as tournament.

T. R. PELL: Yes.

ROBERT LEROY: Yes.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I do.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes.

W. M. HALL: Yes.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

DEAN MATHEY: Yes.

R. C. SEAVER: Yes, if you care to win.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Certainly.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

W. C. GRANT: Yes.

Do you consider it good ethics to intentionally play to exhaust an opponent when he seems to be tiring or out of physical condition?

Should You Try to Exhaust an Opponent?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Yes, because you have perhaps tired him by your skill, etc.

T. C. BUNDY: The best tactics; let him stay out of tournaments if out of condition; would be unsportsmanlike to play into his hand.

K. H. BEHR: Yes.

F. B. ALEXANDER: Yes.

R. D. LITTLE: Certainly.

H. H. HACKETT: Yes.

B. C. WRIGHT: Yes, if it is a big tournament match.

Parke and Dixon Disagree Here

J. C. PARKE: No, not if it means an alteration from your usual game.

C. P. NIXON: Yes, one is entitled to make the most of one's superior physical condition.

R. L. MURRAY: O. K. also in tournament. Although

give him a chance to rest all he wants if he hurts himself.

G. M. CHURCH: Yes.

W. M. WASHBURN: Yes.

All But Parke Agree That it is Fair

ELIA FOTTRELL: Yes.

CLARENCE HOBART: Of course.

E. B. DEWHURST: Same as to the question about lobbing in the face of the sun.

J. R. STRACHAN: Yes.

C. R. GARDNER: Part of the game is condition, a big part of it.

A. S. DABNEY: Yes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Yes.

F. C. INMAN: Yes.

W. F. JOHNSON: Any legitimate style of play which assists in winning is good ethics.

N. W. NILES: Yes.

T. R. PELL: Yes, all in the game; his condition is his fault and he deserves to lose if he can't stand the strain. So to keep him running to tire him out is perfectly fair.

Opponent Deserves to Lose if He Can't Stand the Strain

ROBERT LEROY: Yes.

A. M. SQUAIR: Yes.

G. F. TOUCHARD: I certainly do.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Yes, I believe confidence is half of what is known as "tennis ability".

W. M. HALL: Yes.

RICHARD HARTE: Yes.

DEAN MATHEY: Yes.

R. C. SEAVER: That's part of the game if it's a tournament match.

G. C. SHAFER: Yes, beat him anyway you can, without breaking the rules, or being ungentlemanly in bearing and talk.

S. H. VOSHELL: Yes.

E. H. WHITNEY: Most assuredly.

I. C. WRIGHT: Yes.

W. C. GRANT: Yes, tennis is a question of endurance as well as execution of the strokes.

XIX.

RACKETS, BALLS, SHOES, ETC.

Importance of Selecting a Good Racket

OF ALL THE implements of the game, the racket of course is the one that is most important to the player. Individual taste must govern each man in the selection of his rackets, but there are some points in common that all agree on. Tight stringing is essential to success in all match play, but there is such a thing as being too tight. Experienced players often find their rackets too tight when they first come from the shop and it takes several days' play to ease up on the tension enough to make the cut strokes take well on them.

Cut Strokes Require an Open Mesh

Cut strokes depend for their success largely on a longer contact between the stings and the ball than do other strokes, and the tighter the strings are the shorter will be the contact, as the ball flies away too fast on its course from a very tightly-strung racket. Too small a mesh in the stringing also will make it difficult to get much twist or cut on the ball.

As the ball rolls across the strings, every other string (those where the cross strings are under the long strings) rubs against the rough surface of the ball and makes it revolve. If the mesh of the racket is very small these will be so close together that they will not grip the surface but

slide over like a smooth board and the ball will get less spin.

Coarser Gut for Dirt Court Play

For dirt court play, a coarser gut is preferable to that used for grass court play. On turf, the fine strings will not cut so quickly as where the sharp sand is picked up by the ball and rubbed on the strings, and also the ball becomes slightly heavier from the moisture in the grass and requires the greater resiliency of the thinner strings.

But in any case, a good racket is essential for even beginners at the game. Nothing will handicap the learner more surely than poor tools for his work, and a good racket is sure to give him a good start.

Best Weight for a Racket

The weight of the racket depends somewhat on the size of the player and his physical strength. The average weight in use by tournament players varies from fourteen to fourteen and one-half ounces. Dirt courts require a slightly heavier racket than grass but half an ounce is easily enough for this difference. This seems like splitting hairs somewhat, but half an ounce in a tennis racket is a very material difference. Women generally use lighter rackets, theirs most often varying from thirteen to fourteen ounces.

Weight Should Be Evenly Balanced

The weight should be evenly balanced, so that the racket is carried easily in the hand and can be brought up quickly into striking position without too much jerk on the wrist. Just what this balance should be is hard to describe, but experienced players balance a racket critically be-

fore buying it, and form their own opinions from the way it feels.

Size of the Handle Important

The size of the handle that should be used is of considerable importance, but as in the question of weight it depends largely on the taste of the player, and to some extent on the size of his hand. It is a safe rule to lay down, however, that when the thumb and first finger are wrapped around the handle at its lower end where you grasp it that they should overlap each other by at least an inch.

Large Handles Weaken the Grasp

Large handles generally have a tendency to weaken the grip of the average player and I would strongly recommend a small handle. Among the best tournament players the most popular size is a handle 5¼ inches in circumference, but some prefer larger. Personally, I believe this size is the best, but I would prefer to go under rather than over it in selecting a racket, as the smaller handle gives a firmer grip and better control. It is easy to measure the circumference with the edge of a handkerchief or a piece of cord and a ruler.

Beware of Fancy Grips

It is well to beware of fancy grips on rackets. There are a great variety of these in the stores, but the safest handle to select is that of cedar with an octagonal grip, not sharp on the edges, but with rough or "combed" wood for the hand. Some players have a tendency to perspire freely in the hand while playing and find it difficult for this reason to prevent the racket from slipping occasionally while in play. Electric tape or surgeon's adhesive plaster is sometimes wrapped around the handle to prevent this slipping, but I have never

found it a success, generally enlarging the handle unnecessarily, and in hot weather becoming too sticky. Rubber handles, cork handles and fancy shaped handles seldom prove to be of advantage, and it is better to get used to the standard shape and learn to grip that properly than to experiment with odd shapes or surfaces.

Balls Should Be Right in Size and Weight

The rules are very clear regarding the size and weight of the balls, which are very closely prescribed. Poor balls that are off in size or weight will be found a great handicap, and it is very bad practice to play with even good balls after they become damp so as to be too heavy. Dirt courts cut the covers and stitches of the balls rapidly, particularly when the surface is gritty, and the balls become light, soft and flabby under these conditions, so that old balls hurt one's play.

Nets Should Be Always Correct Height

The net should always be at the right height while in use. A sagging or high net is an abomination, and a few hours of practice over a low net will do an incalculable amount of damage, which will become apparent soon after in a tendency to hit the top band frequently when playing over a net of the correct height.

Never Play on Courts That Are Marked Wrong

Great care should be taken that courts are marked out properly, for a few inches difference in the length or breadth of a court will throw the player's calculation off quickly and train the eye to the wrong distances. The lines should be two inches wide in the marking; extra wide lines and very narrow ones being equally annoying. A standard width of line is very desirable so that the player can become accustomed to a certain

white line before him always and always find it the same.

Difference of Opinion as to Shoes

There is considerable difference of opinion regarding the selection of rubber-soled shoes for tennis. The larger number of the tournament players use light canvas low shoes, commonly called "sneakers," and find them, if fitting snugly, a great help to light-footedness and agility in getting about the court. Some players, however, insist that these thin shoes burn the feet and blister them, and that a heavy-soled tennis shoe is preferable.

"Sneakers" Save Much Weight

Vaile in his "Modern Lawn Tennis", carried his aversion to heavy shoes so far that he calculated that the average English player carried twelve ounces more weight on each foot than the man who wears a "sneaker." Allowing five steps per second, he continues, the player with the heavy shoe lifts 13,500 pounds more in an hour, which would be quite a drain on strength, the more so when a long match often lasts from two to three hours.

Shoes should be tight without pinching. A loose shoe is far worse than a tight one, since its free play soon works blisters on the feet. Shoes always work larger in use, and they should fit rather tight when new so they will not slip on the feet later.

Other Wearing Apparel

All tennis clothes should fit comfortably and not distract the player's attention while he is playing. A tight or loose belt that is continually needing adjusting is a constant source of annoyance and a shirt that works out from under the belt is

Flopping Shirt-Sleeves Bothersome

also distracting. Tennis shirts are now made with short sleeves that are fine for match play, for a rolled up sleeve is often in the way, and the flopping kind that R. F. Doherty used to play with are enough to take any one's eyes off the ball when the wind blows.

OPINIONS OF THE EXPERTS:

What weight racket do you use? What circumference of handle at the end?

What Size and Weight for Racket?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: 14¼, 5¼+ ZO tape.

T. C. BUNDY: 14 oz., 5½.

K. H. BEHR: 14½ oz. Don't know circumference.

F. B. ALEXANDER: 14¼, 5⅜ handle.

R. D. LITTLE: 14½ oz., 5¼ increased by tape wrapping.

H. H. HACKETT: Hackett and Alexander. 5⅛.

B. C. WRIGHT: 14 to 14½, 5¼.

J. C. PARKE: 14¼ oz., 5¼ inches.

C. P. DIXON: 14¼ oz., 5½, if anything prefer even shorter.

R. L. MURRAY: 14½ to 15 oz., largest size.

G. M. CHURCH: Weight, 14¼. Handle, 5¼.

W. M. WASHBURN: 14½ oz., 5⅜ in.

From 14 to 14½ Oz. the General Rule

ELIA FOTTRELL: Around 14½ oz., 5¼ in. handle.

CLARENCE HOBART: 14 and 14½, 5 in.

E. B. DEWHURST: 14 oz., 5¼ inches.

J. R. STRACHAN: 14 oz., 5⅜ inches, not counting the tape.

C. R. GARDNER: 14½ oz., 5⅜ in. handle.

A. S. DABNEY: 14 oz., circumference 5¼ inches.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: 14 oz., 5¼ in., I think.

F. C. INMAN: 14½ oz., 5⅜ inches.

W. F. JOHNSON: 14 oz., 5¼ inches.

N. W. NILES: 14¼ oz., 5¼ to 5½ in.

T. R. PELL: 14¼ oz., 5⅜ in. handle.

ROBERT LEROY: 13¾ to 14 oz., 5¼ inches.

A. M. SQUAIR: 14 oz. best for me. 14½ I can use also but as my game is more "net" than "back" the

lighter racket is better. A back court player should use heavier racket than a net player.

Handles Generally 5¼" Around

G. F. TOUCHARD: 14 or 14½ oz., 5¼ in.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: 14 oz., medium grip.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: 14 oz., 5⅜ in.

W. M. HALL: 14 oz., 5⅜.

RICHARD HARTE: 14¼ oz., 5¼ inch handle.

DEAN MATHEY: 14 oz., 5¼ in.

R. C. SEAVER: 14. Do not know just what I do use for a circumference. I like the old small handle racket better than the large handle.

G. C. SHAFER: 14¼ oz., big handle.

S. H. VOSHELL: 14¼ oz., 5⅜ with tape.

E. H. WHITNEY: 14¼ oz. racket, 5¼ inch handle.

I. C. WRIGHT: 14¼ oz., 5¼ in. handle.

W. C. GRANT: Weight 14¼ oz. even balance, 5¼ inches circumference.

Do you believe in a large or small handle for the average player?

Should Average Player Use Large or Small Handle?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Small.

K. H. BEHR: Small.

F. B. ALEXANDER: As large as is comfortable.

R. D. LITTLE: Fairly large.

H. H. HACKETT: Small.

B. C. WRIGHT: Large gives better balance.

J. C. PARKE: Small.

C. P. DIXON: Moderate; smaller rather than larger.

R. L. MURRAY: Large, better average.

G. M. CHURCH: Medium.

W. M. WASHBURN: It depends.

ELIA FOTTRELL: Large.

CLARENCE HOBART: Medium.

E. B. DEWHURST: Medium.

J. R. STRACHAN: Large.

C. R. GARDNER: Large.

A. S. DABNEY: No difference; question of individual taste.

Gardner Thinks it Depends on What He Likes

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: Depends on what he likes.
F. C. INMAN: Large.
W. F. JOHNSON: Large.
N. W. NILES: Medium large.
T. R. PELL: Large.
ROBERT LEROY: Large.
A. M. SQUAIR: Rather small, say 5-inch handle.
G. F. TOUCHARD: Small.
J. J. ARMSTRONG: According to size of hand.
LEONARD BEEKMAN: Small.
W. M. HALL: Medium.
RICHARD HARTE: Medium.
DEAN MATHEY: Medium.

Large for Net Play, Small for Back-Court

R. C. SEAVER: Large for a good net player, small for a back-court player.
S. H. VOSHELL: Large.
E. H. WHITNEY: Large.
I. C. WRIGHT: Medium.
W. C. GRANT: It depends on the size of the player's hand.

Do you think thin "sneakers" or heavy-soled shoes are better for hard play?

Which Are Best: "Sneakers" or Thick Soles?

R. N. WILLIAMS, 2ND: Sneakers.
T. C. BUNDY: Spikes for turf; sneakers for hard courts.
K. H. BEHR: Latter.
F. B. ALEXANDER: Depends on the player.
R. D. LITTLE: Heavy.
H. H. HACKETT: Thin sneakers.
B. C. WRIGHT: Heavy-soled shoe.
J. C. PARKE: Heavy-soled.
C. P. DIXON: I find heavy-soled the best. The feet are thereby better protected.
R. L. MURRAY: Heavy-soled shoes.
G. M. CHURCH: Sneakers are worth at least half-fifteen when playing on a hard court.
ELIA FOTTRELL: Heavy-soled shoes.

Opinions Evenly Divided on This

CLARENCE HOBART: Heavy-soled shoes and thick socks.

E. B. DEWHURST: Thin are lighter but harder on the feet.

J. R. STRACHAN: Heavy-soled sneakers.

C. R. GARDNER: Sneakers, as they are lighter and more flexible.

A. S. DABNEY: Heavy shoes.

G. P. GARDNER, JR.: I prefer heavy-soled.

F. C. INMAN: Heavy sole, and a shoe to support instep more than a sneaker does.

W. F. JOHNSON: Fairly heavy.

N. W. NILES: I prefer high "sneakers". Heavy-soled shoes feel clumsy.

T. R. PELL: Sneakers.

ROBERT LEROY: I use sneakers and heavy socks usually.

A. M. SQUAIR: Heavy-soled shoes better. Also heavy socks.

G. F. TOUCHARD: Heavy-soled shoes always.

J. J. ARMSTRONG: Sneakers.

LEONARD BEEKMAN: Heavy-soled.

W. M. HALL: Lighter the better, if they hold the court.

"Sneakers" for Match Play Only

RICHARD HARTE: Sneakers for match play; heavy soles for ordinary use. The latter are the more comfortable but are the heavier and consequently make the player slower.

DEAN MATHEY: Sneakers, if the arch does not suffer.

R. C. SEAVER: Heavy-soled shoes give one much more stability on court and more confidence; light shoes throw me off my balance and spoil many well-directed shots.

G. C. SHAFER: Heavy-soled shoes.

S. H. VOSHELL: The lighter the shoe the better.

E. H. WHITNEY: Thin sneakers.

I. C. WRIGHT: Heavy-soled shoes and heavy socks.

W. C. GRANT: For hard courts, thick soles; medium thickness for grass courts

XX.

LAWN TENNIS THEORIES

Good Practice Must Be Based on Sound Theory

WHILE IT IS no doubt true that too much theory and too little practice make a poor combination, good practice must be based on sound theory—or at least, it ought to be, despite the exceptions to this rule that Brookes and a few other players have furnished.

As the game progresses, new theories are sure to be propounded, and some, like the American twist service, may have a revolutionizing effect. Sound theorists are as valuable to the game as good players, and I am not in accordance with those who would dismiss without consideration the views of a critic because he is not a good player himself. Mr. Vaile is as much entitled to a hearing as the most expert player.

Vaile's Ideas Not All Original

However, Vaile's theories are not all original with him, nor are they all safe to accept on their face. His sweeping condemnation of the English method of gripping the racket is not justified by the results of matches on record. We cannot forget the admitted superiority of the Doherty brothers so soon as that.

Nor can one approve the idea that Brookes is a sound model to copy for young players who are learning the game. By nearly every other authority on record, the great Australian is con-

sidered a player whose success has defied the accepted laws of good form.

More Than One Way to Play the Backhand

The Vaile theory that there is only one way to play the backhand stroke, as it is shown by Vaile himself and Theodore Pell, may also be questioned with propriety. Brookes, whom he takes as a model, does not play this stroke, nor did Wilding, or Larned or any of the other really great players on record. Most observers believe Larned's backhand stroke better than Pell's, and Wilding's more effective also.

Where Did the Centre Theory Originate?

The most remarkable feature of Vaile's recent book, however, is the apparent effort to assume credit for the centre theory. He republishes Max Decugis's preface to his French edition in which Decugis refers to "Vaile's famous centre-theory" with no denial of the authorship. This sounds strange to Americans, who remember well the theory as developed by R. D. Wrenn as far back as 1895, and who were fully familiar with it as expounded in a previous book published in 1904 by the present author.

British Ideas on the Subject

Vaile's first exposition of this theory came in 1905 in the London "Field," and F. W. Payn in his "Secrets of Lawn Tennis" (page 70), declares: "Anyone who cares to look at the article in question will find that Mr. Paret's book was the fountain-head from which it proceeded in a singularly undiluted form." Certainly, before Vaile knew anything of lawn tennis, the theory was well worked out in America, and certainly before he published anything about it, it had been fully expounded in print.

Payn's Views Narrowly English

Payn's abuse of Vaile in the three books he published was not all justified, to be sure, and he cannot be considered a critic of unbiased mind. His opinions were too narrowly English to recognize the virtue in any other theories but his own. In five distinct points he took violent issue with the present author, and in each of the five theories criticised, the great majority of the present-day experts (as a glance over the opinions expressed in this volume by the representative players of America, and two of the greatest English players, will prove beyond question) have decided against him.

Five Points Disputed

The five points in dispute were (1) the value or worthlessness (as Payn claimed) of the centre theory; (2) whether or not the American twist service would pay the average player; (3) whether the drop-stroke with top-spin can be hit harder, and still kept in court, than the straight stroke without twist; (4) whether the woman in mixed doubles should play at the net or at the base-line; and (5) whether the English formation in doubles with the partner of the striker-out at the service-line, is sound.

Decugis Contraverts Payn's Claim

The soundness of the centre theory is admitted now by a very great majority of the world's best players, even by the English exponents of modern play. Decugis, the French ex-champion, declares that this alone permitted him to win the covered court championship of England from Gore in the finals, and Gore is one of the two or three Englishmen who were cited by Payn as the

men whose play would absolutely annihilate the centre theory if used against them.

Value of American Twist Services

The practical value of the American twist service to the average player was raised again recently in the series of questions placed before the leading players of the country for use in this volume, and of the thirty-six opinions secured, nineteen declared with me that it does not pay the average player; thirteen think that it does, and four answers were more or less doubtful in character. Parke, the best of the English players, replied unqualifiedly "No."

Drop-Stroke Does Permit Greater Speed

I think it has been proven beyond dispute since Payn's book was published that the drop-stroke does permit greater speed within the same length because of the characteristic curve on the ball. The general impression is that the straight stroke permits more speed but lacks the control of the ball played with top-spin, but it is this very control that permits the player to hit the ball, particularly from a low-bounding return, with greater speed and still keep it in the court, than one with no spin to bring it down to earth.

Payn Swamped on the Mixed Doubles Question

On the question of where the woman should stand in playing mixed doubles, there is to-day hardly any diversity of opinion, and Payn would find himself hopelessly at odds now with the best experts. Out of thirty-seven opinions secured on this point from the leading players, thirty support the position taken by the present writer (*i. e.*, that the woman should play at the net), and only three side with Payn, four answers being non-committal.

Even English Ideas Now Do Not Support Him

Even English opinions do not support his position. Parke's characteristic reply is: "At the net if she can volley, and if she can't volley, then at the net and let her learn." Dixon replies: "The combinations over here with the lady at the net have done wonderfully well, and show that if the lady is only a fair volleyer, the advantage is with them."

I personally played mixed doubles in English tournaments as far back as 1898 with this style, and the English girl partners with whom I played looked at me in astonishment when I asked them to go up and volley, and my opponents were equally amazed at the manoeuver. But times have changed and Dixon tells us now that the American style is winning abroad.

Soundness of Doubles Formation Still in Dispute

The last point of controversy, as to the soundness of the English formation for doubles, is open to more dispute than any of the others, but only a small minority of Americans support the contention that it is sound. Twenty-six of the experts consulted condemn the position of the partner of the striker-out at the service-line, while only six believe it to be sound, five answers being doubtful.

However, this cannot be said to prove conclusively the claim I have advanced, for recent International tests have somewhat undermined the theory. Doust and Jones, playing for Australasia, beat McLoughlin and Hackett in the International matches of 1913, the winners using this formation; while Brookes and Wilding again adopted the same formation in the matches of 1914 and

beat McLoughlin and Bundy, the best team we had to offer.

Vaile Believes the English Position Unsound

Vaile advances the same contention, that the English position is unsound, and cites a number of historical instances among the best players where he believes it has proven so. The chief support of the soundness of the play has come from the success of the Doherty brothers against all-comers with this position, but Vaile declares that they were forced to give it up by American and Australian teams. Beals Wright, who played on four International teams, says: "I have seen the foremost English teams driven from this position."

Recent Results Do Not Strengthen This Contention

However that may be, more recent successes over here of later Australian teams that have succeeded with it do not strengthen this contention. Personally, I still hold to my first position that the formation should prove the undoing of any team opposed to a pair of fast volleyers from the close net position, if other skill is equal.

Curiously enough, Parke declares in this volume that he has never seen this "formation," but photographs reproduced herein should refresh his memory in this respect.

New Theory on Looking Away from the Ball

I have advanced in this volume what I believe to be a new theory regarding the use of the eyes—the necessity and practice of looking away from the ball before it is hit. I shall not be surprised if it is disputed, because at first it seems to revolutionize all the previously established instructions on the game. But I have taken much

pains to fortify the argument before it was put in print.

Vaile repeatedly insists that the player must not only keep his eyes on the ball, but even advises him to watch that *part* of the ball he intends to hit. McLoughlin, in his recent book, also gives the same advice, yet both weaken their own contention by other statements. Vaile (p. 125) says: "As a matter of fact, nobody watches the ball onto his racket, nor indeed as near to it as he should."

McLoughlin's Book Supports This Principle

McLoughlin (p. 124) cites an instance of practical play that helps greatly to support my claim. Telling of his match against Brookes in Australia in 1909, and the great difficulty he had in trying to discover which way Brookes was placing his service, he found that he got information from his eyes before the ball or racket showed him its direction.

Does Success Vindicate Bad Methods?

Williams, in his introduction to McLoughlin's book, advances a theory that is rather difficult to accept. He says of the Californian: "It seems to me that success is a complete vindication of the methods he has chosen." But McLoughlin himself later on in the book admits that his backhand stroke is all wrong, and that his grip could be improved upon.

The Ideal Styles to Follow

To consider all of his methods good to follow because they have won, seems as dangerous as recommending beginners to copy Brookes's style. It would seem to me much better if we asked young players to copy Larned in his passing strokes, McLoughlin in his service, Alexander in his forehand drive, Pell in the backhand drive and

Clothier in his volley. To accept all of McLoughlin's play as good because he has been successful seems likely to lead ambitious novices into pitfalls by trying to follow the same methods.

Action Photographs Often Deceptive

It is a very easy matter to condemn the faults of players shown in action photographs, and such condemnation is not always just. Instantaneous photographs of fast action cannot always be relied upon. One picture of McLoughlin just starting a forehand stroke, and two of Williams starting backhand strokes have been severely criticised by Vaile because in each case the wrong foot is forward.

But in each instance it seems apparent that the player was "stepping into" the stroke, and if the camera had been snapped a fraction of a second later the other foot would have advanced and would then have appeared forward before the stroke was completed. The habit of "stepping into" the stroke is not always approved, to be sure, but the Doherty brothers recommend it and many fine players have succeeded with it.

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